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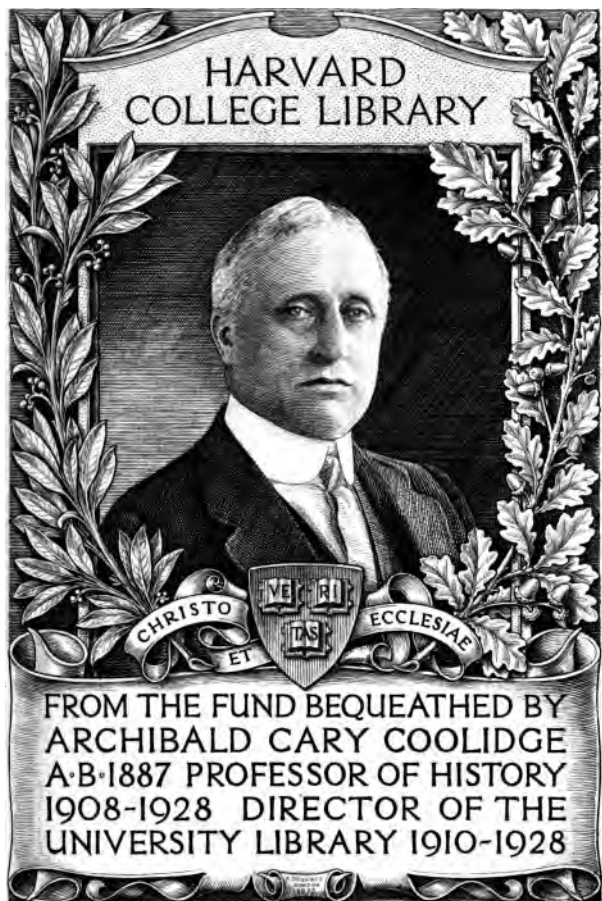
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CONSIDERATIONS

ON

NEGRO SLAVERY;

WITH

A BRIEF VIEW OF THE PROCEEDINGS
RELATIVE TO IT,

IN THE

British Parliament.

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CONSIDERATIONS

ON

NEGRO SLAVERY.

THE following pages have been drawn up with the view of communicating a clear knowledge of the question respecting Negro Slavery, as it exists in the West Indies, to those who may not have had an opportunity of perusing the numerous pamphlets that have been published on the subject. The Committee under whose direction this tract has been prepared, are very far from wishing to excite a temporary glow of feeling, by exaggerating the horrors of slavery, or by representing individual instances of cruelty as fair specimens of the usual conduct of West India planters towards their slaves. They look to the gradual and lasting operation of reason and information upon religious and liberal minds; and they have no doubt but that, when these have been allowed sufficient time to operate, a nation, which, like Scotland, has been taught to consider religion as the first, and freedom as the next blessing it has derived from the bounty of God, will rise as one man to declare, that it is neither consistent with the honour, the interest, nor the duty of the nation, to debar *six hundred thousand* of our fellow-subjects from any, the slightest participation in these blessings.

Those who take any interest in this most important subject, are aware, that considerable exertions have been made in Parliament, for effecting the immediate Mitigation, and ultimate Abolition of Negro Slavery: and these exertions have been seconded by Associations in London, Edinburgh, and almost all the principal towns of the United Kingdom. The single object of these Associations is to alleviate the state of Negro Slavery in the West Indies, and so to raise the character of the Negroes, by religious instruction, and by political regulations, as gradually to fit them for the enjoyment of personal freedom; and of this, after all that has been written on the subject, they see no reason whatever for being ashamed; nor has the evidence that has been brought forward by the advocates for Slavery as it exists, tended in the slightest degree to shake their confidence in the justice and feasibility of their object. They do not assume, nor do they even insinuate, that the slave-holders are generally cruel; but they assert, that from the present state of the law, they may be so, almost to any extent, without any risk of punishment. They do not assert that no improvements have taken place in the Slave laws; but they assert that they still give such powers to the White, as can scarcely be possessed without being abused*. They do not assert that nothing has been done for the religious and moral instruction of the Negroes; but they assert (on the authority of their opponents) that, at this day, after a lapse of two hundred years, during which British planters have had the absolute command of the Negro population, that population remains in a state of gross ignorance and brutal immorality; that as now circumstanced they are incapable of appreciating or using the liberty which we are anxious should be communicated to them; that marriage, the very first element of civil society, is incom-

* See Note A.

patible with their happiness, and unrecognised and unprotected by the laws under which they live *; and, finally, that such is their indolence and apathy, that to expect liberated Negroes to work beyond what is actually necessary for the supply of their immediate animal wants, is to betray a total ignorance of their character.

Such is the representation of the actual state of the Slave population, as drawn by those who deprecate any alteration in the system under which this character has been formed; and such is the state which, we are unwillingly obliged to say, a reverend advocate for Slavery, with an obtuseness of moral feeling fully equal to that which he has been describing, ventures to call superior to that of the British peasantry †.

We have now to shew that this debased state of character is not to be attributed to any peculiarities of constitution in the Negro, but that it is solely and entirely to be attributed to the system under which he has been placed. And, in order to prove this, we need not have recourse to those true, though hackneyed arguments, by which philosophers of old, and even school-boys in our time, have proved that Slavery is destructive of all the higher virtues. We are fortunately enabled to appeal to facts,—to facts existing at this moment. We can refer to a Negro population of nearly 17,000, the greater portion having been liberated from Slavery ‡, of whom we may assert, that they are at least rapidly advancing to an equality with our own countrymen in knowledge, industry, and morality. We refer to the colony of Sierra Leone, the greater portion of whose inhabitants have, during the last ten years, been rescued by British cruisers from such Slave ships as have been

* See Note B.

† See Note C.

‡ By the last returns the population is 16,061; of these more than 15,000 are natives of Africa, the rest being Europeans, and Maroon or Nova Scotia settlers.

found transgressing the treaties of 1815; and having shewn what the West Indian system, operating for two centuries, has produced, we may now turn to the opposite example, and shew what has been effected in a few years by a system of liberal policy and religious instruction.

At Sierra Leone, then, instead of compulsory labour and incorrigible indolence, we behold 17,000 of our fellow-creatures rescued from Slavery, and living under a free government, rising rapidly from brute ignorance into an intelligent, a civilized, and an industrious population. The Gazette of the colony, appealing to facts within the cognizance of its readers, asserts, "that the superiority of the mountain roads, the cleanness and respectable appearance of the villages, the immense forests cleared away, and the soil covered with the various productions of the climate, fully attest the *unremitting* industry, (we are quoting the very words of the Gazette,) the *unremitting* industry of this interesting people."

With respect to morality and intelligence, we find the Chief-Justice of the colony observing, that ten years ago, when the population was only 4000, there were 40 cases on the calendar; and now that the population was upwards of 16,000, there were only six cases. We again find the same magistrate declaring, that many of the liberated Africans are perfectly qualified to serve upon juries; and that they have so served with perfect satisfaction to their fellow-jurors. We could easily multiply proofs, equally strong, of the industry, intelligence, and moral character of the liberated Negroes at Sierra Leone. What we have stated is fully sufficient to prove, not merely that the Negroes possess all the natural qualifications for liberty in common with their fellow-creatures of a different colour, but that they have made more rapid progress in the knowledge and practice of Christianity, and in the arts and duties of civilized life, than was ever before made by any barbarous people whatever.

It is upon these unquestioned facts that we ground the principles of our Association. Contrasting the present condition of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies with that to which we see that it is not only possible but easy to raise them, we feel that it is our duty, and we have made it our fixed determination, to use every lawful and prudent means to elevate them from the condition of *brutes*, in which they have been placed and retained by violence, to that of *men*, for which they are qualified by the possession of those intellectual and moral faculties which our common Creator has equally bestowed upon them and us.

But here we are stopped, on the very threshold of our proceedings, by the advocates for Slavery, who tell us that the subject is so full of delicacy and danger, that the bare mention of any proposed alteration in the system is enough to excite disaffection, rebellion and massacre in the West Indies. We will not stop to ask what must be the merits of that system to which examination is ruin. We will not ask why the Slaves, treated rather as children than as servants, should be so insensible of their blessings as to rise in fury against their benefactors, merely because we in Britain are so ignorant or so stupid as to underrate the happiness of their lot. But we say, that whatever may be the weight of this argument, the advocates for Slavery have now brought it to the decisive test of experiment. If the violent and inflammatory resolutions which have lately been passed in the colonial meetings, and inserted in the colonial newspapers for the information of all whom it may concern,—if these resolutions, holding out (however falsely) to the Slaves the assistance of a large body of English fanatics, in the wildest schemes for overthrowing all law and property in the West Indies, and representing even the Government and Parliament of this country as concurring in these violent and destructive plans,—if these resolutions shall not be followed by rebellion and massacre, then certainly it must

be considered as satisfactorily proved, that no danger is to be apprehended from the most violent discussions. But if, on the other hand, it shall turn out, that the publication of these resolutions has been immediately followed by insurrectionary movements among the Negroes ; much as we deplore the effect, we insist that it shall be attributed to its evident and immediate cause,—not to the resolutions of Mr Canning, nor to the speeches of Mr Wilberforce, nor to the pamphlets of Mr Clarkson, but to the unaccountable rashness of the colonists themselves : and while we admit the necessity of prudence and caution, we lament the conduct of our opponents should be diametrically opposed to the advice they have so frequently bestowed upon us.

But our opponents have also facts on their side to produce. They bid us look to St Domingo, and say, Whether it is our wish to produce in the British West India Islands those dreadful scenes of murder and desolation which Negro emancipation produced in that unfortunate colony. To this we answer, That it is very far from being our wish that the British Government should adopt, towards the British colonies, measures in any degree similar to those of the French Conventional Assembly towards St Domingo ; nor, we conceive, can any two proceedings be more essentially different than the resolutions of Mr Canning, and the French decree of 1794, by which Slavery was abolished throughout the whole of the French colonies ; the former only urging upon the colonists the necessity of a more liberal and Christian policy towards the slave population, as tending ultimately to qualify them for the enjoyment of freedom : the latter at once, and without any preparation, bestowing unconditional emancipation. But waving all consideration of the total difference of the two measures, we affirm, that the emancipation of the Negroes in St Domingo was productive of no massa-

ces or insurrections whatever ; and that those who maintain the contrary, manifest a great ignorance of one of the most interesting portions of modern history, or a still more blameable wish to pervert and conceal the truth.

From the year 1790 to 1793, St Domingo was indeed, like the mother country, a prey to contending factions ; and royalists and republicans, whites and free men of colour, carried on the most sanguinary contests with each other. In these contests, however, the Slaves as a body took no part, though individuals, enticed by the offer of freedom, attached themselves to the different contending parties. From the declaration of freedom, in 1794, we have the authority of Malenfant, Lacroix, and Vincent, all Frenchmen of rank and character, for asserting that no commotions whatever occurred ; and, what is more wonderful, that the Slaves continued to work as industriously and quietly as before. Lacroix informs us, that in the year 1797, “ the colony marched as by enchantment towards its ancient splendour : cultivation prospered ; every day produced perceptible proofs of its progress.”

St Domingo was indeed again doomed to be the scene of rapine and bloodshed, when, in 1802, Bonaparte, then First Consul of France, sent out Leclerc with a large army to reduce the Negroes to their former bondage. Then indeed, a scene of horror was exhibited, unparalleled by any of the crimes of revolutionary France : but let the shame and the guilt of these be attributed to the invaders, not to the invaded ;—to the French colonists who instigated, and to the French Government which attempted, the mad and wicked project of restoring Slavery ;—not to the persecuted Negroes, who shewed, by their valour and constancy in a defensive war, as well as by their former quietness and industry in a state of peace, that they were worthy of freedom. These being the facts of the case, we claim the benefit of the evidence thus brought forward by our opponents, as proving that emancipation, as it took

place in St Domingo, produced not idleness and insurrection, but industry and quiet.

Of the present state of St Domingo, or Hayti as it is commonly called, it is not easy to obtain a well authenticated account. It is clear that it has not recovered from the dreadful effects of the French war in 1802; that is from the entire abstraction of all capital from the island; and the destruction of all the property which could not be removed. But on the other hand, it is equally clear, that the Haytians, the Free Negroes of St Domingo, are not indolent, and that their labour is not unproductive. The island abounds with provisions of all sorts, and the Haytian Negro, very different from the Slave Negroes of the other islands, has the means of indulging in animal food to the utmost extent of his wishes. The natural consequence of this plenty has been a rapid increase of the population, which, in spite of the dreadful wars which have desolated the island, is now considerably greater than it ever was at any former period.

But this is not all.—Hayti possesses a very considerable foreign trade in Coffee, Cotton, and Mahogany. The tonnage of the United States employed in the trade to Hayti, during the year ending September 1821, was 50,000 tons, and the value of the imports into the United States from Hayti, 2,246,237 dollars; the exports from the United States to Hayti being nearly to the same amount, and so rapidly has this trade increased, that the value of the imports from the United States into Hayti, during the last year, is stated in the Official Gazette of Hayti, to be upwards of *six millions of dollars*, and those from Great Britain upwards of *three millions*. The trade with France is also very considerable, probably exceeding that with Great Britain. If, therefore, we calculate the value of the annual imports into Hayti at *twelve millions of dollars*, we have a consumption of foreign merchandize twice as great as that of Jamaica, and for which payment must be made in the

produce of Haytian industry. Still, therefore, we are willing to look to St Domingo.

In the year 1780, Mr Steele, a proprietor of large plantations in the Island of Barbadoes, finding that his estate was going to ruin under the ordinary system, and particularly affected at what he called the *destruction* of his Negroes, resolved, though at the advanced age of eighty, to take upon himself the superintendence of his own estates. After a residence of two years, which Mr Steele employed in acquiring a practical knowledge of West Indian husbandry, and of the temper, habits, and dispositions of the Slaves, he began to put to the test of experiment the three following questions: 1. Whether he could not do away all arbitrary punishment, and yet keep up discipline among his Slaves? 2. Whether he could not carry on the plantation work through the stimulus of reward? And, 3. Whether he could not change Slavery itself, into a condition of a milder name and character, so that the Slaves should be led to the very threshold of liberty, from which they might next step, without hazard, into the rank of free men, if circumstances should permit and encourage such a procedure?

The first of these experiments Mr Steele brought to a successful result, by taking away all whips and instruments of punishment from his overseers and drivers, and instituting a court or jury composed of the elder and more respectable Negroes, for the punishment of all minor offences. After some time, he tried and succeeded in the second, by abolishing task-work, and paying his Negroes wages in proportion to the quantity of work done by them; and, *lastly*, he effected the third, by giving his Slaves the copyhold property of small portions of his estate, making them at the same time *adscripti glebæ*, or serfs attached to the soil.

For a full detail of the manner in which these interesting experiments were carried on, and of their practical

results, we would refer to Dr Dickson's valuable Work on the Mitigation of Slavery. We will only, in conclusion, quote Mr Steele's answer to the 17th Question of the Committee of the Privy Council, on the affairs of the Slave Trade; namely, that while under the old system, the ratio of births to deaths was as 15 to 57; under the improved system, the ratio was as 44 to 41; and that, at the same time, the net clearance of the estate was above three times what it had been before.

We have thus, by the evidence of facts, been able to establish three principles of vast importance in this question. From the existing state of Sierra Leone, we conclude, that the Negro is equally capable with the White, of religious and social cultivation:—from the authentic records of the Revolution in St Domingo, we conclude that emancipation, even when rashly and prematurely carried into effect, was not productive of those deplorable consequences which the advocates of the present system consider as the necessary consequence of emancipation; and, lastly, from the experiments of Mr Steele we conclude, that an alleviation of the system of Slavery, to the extent to which he carried it, while it would add to the comforts and raise the character of the Negro population, would at the same time tend directly to the pecuniary advantage of their masters.

It now only remains for us to give a brief statement of the steps which have been taken in this country towards the mitigation of Slavery, and of the consequences with which those measures have been attended. On 15th May, 1823, the subject was brought under the notice of the House of Commons by Mr Buxton, and at the same time, a series of Resolutions were proposed by Mr Canning, to which the House agreed without one dissenting voice. These Resolutions were,

1. That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive

measures for ameliorating the condition of the Slave Population in his Majesty's colonies.

2. That through a determined and persevering, but judicious and temperate enforcement of such measures, this House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the Slave Population, such as may prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of his Majesty's subjects.

3. That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of this purpose, at the earliest period that may be compatible with the well-being of the Slaves, the safety of the Colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of all parties concerned therein.

The substance of these resolutions was immediately conveyed by letters from Lord Bathurst to the Colonial Governments; and it is deeply to be regretted, that temperate and cautious as they appear to us, they have been received, on the part of some of the colonists, with the most violent and acrimonious opposition. The determined hostility to all effectual improvement, which is manifested in the Jamaica and Barbadoes resolutions, while it shews how little can be said for the existing state of Slavery, on the grounds of humanity, justice, or sound policy, forces us unwillingly to fear, that we are not to look for the co-operation of the Legislatures of these islands*.

Other islands, on the contrary, have received the communication of his Majesty's Ministers with respectful cordiality, and have expressed their readiness to co-operate in any reasonable plans for the improvement of the Negroes. At Tobago, an act was passed last year, (previous to Lord Bathurst's communication,) which establishes courts of judicature for the Slaves, and gives them the benefit of trial by jury,—which admits the evidence of Slaves

* See Note D.

against White persons,—appoints guardians to take charge of their complaints,—directs persons committed as Slaves to be discharged as free, unless an owner proves his claim to them within six weeks,—secures to Slaves the possession and right of willing their property,—abolishes the Sunday markets, and grants them one day in every week for cultivating their provision grounds, except during four months of the year. At Nevis, we find the two branches of the Legislature declaring that they see no possible objection to a Slave buying up his freedom, under certain regulations; and resolving that the whip shall be abolished entirely as an instrument of driving,—that, as far as may be found practicable, the slaves shall be rendered *adscripti glebæ*,—that measures shall be taken for the admission of Slave evidence under certain regulations, and that the punishment of females by cart whipping and exposure of the person should be discontinued. At St Christopher's, the Council has entered into similar resolutions. "These," say they, "are framed with a view of improving the physical and moral condition of the Slave, so as eventually to qualify him for a state of freedom, to which object this board will earnestly contribute, upon such provisions being made for the protection of the person and property of the proprietors of Slaves in this island, as may be expected from the wisdom and justice of the British Parliament, and from the benevolent solicitude of our Sovereign."

These dawnings of liberality ought to be hailed as the promise of better things yet to come. If this be not all that we could wish, it is perhaps more than we had a right to expect; and if the force of habit and prevalent opinion, even upon candid minds, be taken into account, we must allow that the planters of Tobago, Nevis, and St Christopher's deserve the thanks and the approbation

of their fellow-subjects in this country. And with reference to the white inhabitants of other islands, even of those where slavery may be most severe, and where all overtures towards improvement have been most offensively rejected, we would disclaim not only all calumny, but all personal rancour or general invective. We only believe them to be men of like passions with ourselves; and we are conscious that the best of us is not good enough to be entrusted with absolute power over his fellow-creatures. We believe them to labour under the influence of strong prejudices, under which we in all probability should have sunk, had we been placed in similar circumstances; and we most earnestly hope that they will be enabled to see, before it is too late to profit by the knowledge, that the interests of justice and expediency must ultimately coincide.

Tortola and Antigua have also acceded to Mr Canning's Resolutions. From the latter of these islands particularly, we confidently anticipated such a decision, as it has long been honourably distinguished by attention to the religious and moral wants of the Slave population.

On the 16th March 1824, Mr Canning in the House of Commons, and Lord Bathurst in the House of Lords, made a statement respecting the proceedings and intentions of Government, on the subject of West Indian Slavery. An order of the King in Council was produced, containing the various measures of reform, which it had been determined immediately to institute in the island of Trinidad, and hereafter in St Lucie, Demarara, Berbice, the Mauritius and the Cape of Good Hope; these being the only Colonies where the Crown has the direct power of legislation. This order begins with appointing a protector and guardian of the Slaves, to whom a variety of important functions are assigned, and who is not allowed to possess any agricultural Slaves. In the different quarters of the island, as-

sistant guardians are appointed, who are not debarred from being the possessors even of agricultural Slaves.

It is an unpleasant task to point out deficiencies in a measure which is essentially just and good; but it would be improper to pass over this permission for the guardians to hold domestic Slaves, and for the assistants to hold both domestic and agricultural Slaves, without regretting that it is calculated to neutralize much of the good contained in the other provisions of the order. The duty of the guardian is to protect the Slaves against the tyranny of Masters, and how can he be expected to do this faithfully, when he is united to the masters by an imagined identity of interest, and by all the prejudices which arise from the *esprit de corps*.

The order goes on to prohibit the flogging of women, absolutely, and under any circumstances. The use of the whip, or any other instrument of coercion, to compel labour in the field, is also prohibited. When used, as an instrument of punishment by the master or manager, the number of lashes is not to exceed *twenty-five* at one time, and for *one* offence; nor is any punishment to be inflicted till former lacerations are healed. Twenty-four hours must elapse between the commission of a crime and its punishment; and, when punishment is inflicted, it must be in the presence of a competent witness, besides the person by whose authority it is inflicted. A record of all punishments is to be kept, signed by the whites present; and copies of it certified by oath, are to be transmitted to the Governor, and by him to the Secretary of State. It is to be regretted that this excellent regulation applies only to Slaves upon plantations, but not to domestic, mechanic, or jobbing Slaves. In case of cruel or unlawful conduct towards a Slave, the Master may be deprived of such Slave: And any Master or Overseer who is twice convicted of such conduct, is to be deprived of all his Slaves, and declared incapable of

holding Slaves for the future, or of being employed as a manager of Slaves.

As soon as effectual provision shall have been made for the religious instruction of the Slaves, Sunday markets are to cease; and in the meantime, they are not to be held after ten in the forenoon; as soon as such provision is made, then Thursday is to be the market-day instead of Sunday. The master is forbidden to compel the Slave to labour on Sunday. No day, however, being given to the Slave by this order, in place of Sunday, he will be as much compelled by the necessity of the case, to labour for his own subsistence on that day, as if he were driven to the field by the whip. He must work on Sunday or he must starve.

The intermarrying of Slaves is provided for, and such marriage is made binding, whether solemnized by a Church of England, a Romish, or a Dissenting Clergyman. It is made unlawful by any judicial process, to seize and sell separately from each other the husband and wife, or reputed wife, or the child under sixteen years of age. This part of the order lays no restraint on the power of the *owner* to effect a separation of those near connexions by sale. We may hope that the omission arises from such a power being denied to the owner by the Spanish law now in force at Trinidad.

The property of Slaves is secured to them by law, and banks are instituted in which they may deposit their savings; and such property they may transmit by will. All taxes and fees on manumission are abolished, and a power is given and adequately secured, to Slaves, for purchasing their own freedom, or that of their children, at a fair appraisalment. Any Slave whom any Clergyman, Priest, or Religious Teacher shall certify to understand the nature of an oath, shall be recorded as entitled to give evidence in courts of justice, in all cases except in civil suits where his master is concerned, or in trials affecting the *life of a white*. This

from the moral ignorance which they refuse to enlighten; it arises from the powerful and increasing body of Mulattoes, many of whom have acquired in the schools and the society of this country, knowledge, principles, and manners, which raise them greatly above the average of the white colonists. How long such men, accustomed to the freedom and the courtesy of Britain, will submit to the degradation of their West Indian condition, it is impossible for us to say—but it needs no prophetic gift to be certain that they will not submit to it for ever. Let the Colonists look to these things. They are in imminent danger; their danger is every day increasing; and the struggles of a timorous cruelty will serve only to hasten the catastrophe. In order to avert it, they must humanize, liberalize, and Christianize their policy. The choice is still in their hands; but if, in the insolence and madness of despotism, they are still deaf to the voice of reason,—of justice,—of humanity, and of their country, they must abide the consequences.—And if we are asked, what are these consequences; we would reply in the expressive language of the Colonists themselves, and desire *them*, as they have desired *us*,

“ *To LOOK AT ST DOMINGO.*”

APPENDIX.

NOTE (A) p. 4.

IN the debate on Mr Buxton's motion, May 15, 1823, Mr Marryat brought forward Lieut. Col. Arthur, Governor of Honduras, as an evidence to prove that the state of the Slaves was so good that it scarcely admitted of improvement; and no doubt the extracts from Col. Arthur's dispatch read by Mr Marryat did assert this. His words are: "With regard to the state of the Black population, I have the most heartfelt gratification in assuring your Lordships, that it is scarcely possible it can be meliorated. So great is the kindness, the liberality, the indulgent care of the woodcutters towards their Negroes, that Slavery would scarcely be known to exist in this country, were it not for a few unprincipled adventurers in the town of Belize, who exercise authority over their one or two Slaves in a manner very different from the great body of the community."

On this extract, which is certainly very creditable to the Slave-Masters of Honduras, we may make one remark. It acknowledges that some "unprincipled adventurers treated their Slaves in a very different manner from the great body of the community." Now, as Col. Arthur makes no mention of his attempting to check the misconduct of these adventurers, it is fair to conclude he had no power to interfere, and that their conduct, however cruel it might be, was not *illegal*.

This, however, is not the only letter on the subject from Col. Arthur to Lord Bathurst. We find another in the correspondence ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 16th June 1823. The letter is dated October 7, 1820; and from it we extract the following passage: "In my report to your Lordship on the 16th May last, upon the insurrection which had taken place in the interior of the colony, I represented that it had originated in the harshness with which some of the Slaves had been treated,

“ and that I was not without hope the consequences on that occasion would
 “ have had the beneficial tendency of exciting a greater degree of humanity
 “ towards these unfortunate people. I am much distressed, my Lord, that
 “ my expectations have not been answered ; and such is the increasing seve-
 “ rity and cruelty which is now practised with *impunity*, that although I
 “ am very conscious of the difficulty which has hitherto presented itself to
 “ his Majesty’s Government upon the general question of the administra-
 “ tion of justice in Honduras, I am most reluctantly constrained to bring
 “ the matter again under your Lordship’s consideration. The result of a
 “ trial, which was instituted on the 6th instant, against an inhabitant for
 “ excessive cruelty towards a poor Slave, *absolutely excludes every hope, un-
 “ der the present system of jurisprudence, of bringing offenders to punishment,
 “ when guilty of the most flagrant acts of inhumanity and oppression.*

But not to speak of particular cases or colonies, it should be kept in mind,
 that the general law of the colonies is, *that the evidence of Slaves is wholly in-
 admissible, not only against their owners, but in all cases whatever, either civil
 or criminal, affecting persons of free condition.* And where such is the law,
 it is impossible the Slave should have any *real* legal protection. The law,
 for instance, provides that only thirty-nine lashes shall be inflicted at once ;
 but if a master inflicts ten times that number, and does so in the presence of
 a thousand other slaves, there is no evidence, and he does so with perfect
impunity. The language of the Report is therefore strictly correct.

NOTE (B) p. 5.

The following is the return of marriages of Slaves which have taken place
 during 14 years in 13 parishes of Jamaica up to 1822.

St John’s,	1
St Thomas’s in the Vale,.....	none
Vere,	1
Clarendon,	2
St Ann’s,	none
St Elizabeth’s,	none
St James’s,	2
Portland,	27
Hanover,	none
Falmouth,	1
Port Royal,	2
St Mary’s,	26
St George’s,	47

It should be remembered, that the average Slave population of each of these
 parishes is upwards of 16,000. Nor are the few marriages that have taken
 place recognized or protected by the law. The married Negro has no se-
 curity that his wife shall not be torn from him by the caprice or necessities
 of his owner ; nor, when she is taken from him by force or by seduction, has
 he any claim for legal compensation. But such a union between the sexes,

possessing neither the sanction of religion, nor the protection of law, is not *marriage* :—the proper designation of such a state is *concubinage*.

The Clergy of Grenada are very candid on this point. “The legal solemnization of marriage between Slaves, in this island,” says the Rev. Mr Nash, “is a thing *unheard of*; and, if I may presume to offer my sentiments, “*would, in their present state of imperfect civilization, lead to no beneficial results.*” To the two other clergymen of Grenada, no application had ever been made to marry Slaves. Neither Mr Macmahon, during a ministry of thirty-seven years in British Colonies, nor Mr Webster, in his incumbency of twelve years, had ever *heard of such a thing*. In Trinidad, the marriages of Slaves are stated, in thirteen years, to have been three; in Nevis, Tortola, St Christopher’s, Demerara, Berbice, Tobago, Antigua, Montserrat, Barbadoes, St Vincent’s, Grenada, and Dominica, (with the exception of about sixty marriages stated to have been solemnized in the Romish Church,) the returns are absolutely *none*.

NOTE (C.) p. 5.

The Rev. G. W. Bridges, Rector of the Parish of Manchester, in Jamaica, author of a “Voice from Jamaica.” This gentleman, in reply to Mr Wilberforce, says, “If a constant supply of all the necessaries of life; “the best advice and assistance in sickness; perfect reliance on the future “support of themselves and their children; if warm houses, freedom from “all restraint during fourteen hours of relaxation out of every twenty-four, “with a proportion of labour incalculably inferior to that of our own English “workmen, whose o’er-wearied slumbers are too often broken by the agonizing thoughts of the future, or by vain attempts to sooth the heart-rending “cries of their hungry helpless children; if these are blessings which can “elevate the one above the other, so far the comparison is infinitely in favour “of our West Indian labourers.” Does not the conclusion of this extract look as if the writer were himself aware of the absurdity of his position? He knew, that if the contrasted ideas of slavery and freedom had been presented to the minds of his readers, they would at once reject his conclusion with scorn and indignation. Bold as he is, he dared not say, “in favour of the “Slaves,” but sinks into the softer expression of West Indian labourers, in the vain hope that we may forget, for a moment, that the West Indian labourers are Slaves. But, further than this, if Mr Bridges’ be a fair average account of the state of the Negroes, then every author on the subject, from Edwards down to Pinckard, Williamson, and Stewart, have most grossly misrepresented the state of things. Williamson, in particular, was an advocate for Slavery, and, as a practising surgeon, had better opportunities for judging than Mr Bridges. The reader may compare the following passage with Mr B.’s statement. “The yawy Negroes on estates seemed to me to be in a “very neglected state. In the progress of disease that *maintenance was not “afforded them*, which, with a view to cure, should be liberally dispensed. A “disease, itself injurious to the constitution, is thus aggravated; whereas,

"if nature were supported by *fit diet, clothing, cleanliness, and comfortable housing*, she would work her own cure in most cases." (Williamson, vol. i. p. 88.)

Is it not evident, besides, that Mr B. considers the Negro only in the light of an animal; and would it not be easy to prove, on similar principles, that a well-fed horse is superior in happiness to a British peasant? But, whatever he may think of the Negroes, we will not consent to measure those in whom God has implanted rational and immortal souls, by so mean a standard. The British peasant knows his duty to others, and the duties of others towards him, no driver stimulates his labour with the whip,—no overseer can confine or torture him at his pleasure,—no master can forcibly separate him from his wife or his children. If his talents be superior to his station, the path of honourable ambition lies open before him; and if his lot be hard, it is his own fault if he possesses not the comforts of religion, and the anticipations of immortality. These are the superiorities of the British peasant, and these,—but, above all, the last of these,—it is our object to procure for the West Indian Negro.

NOTE-(D.) p. 13.

Of the degree to which the passions of the Legislators of Jamaica have obscured their judgment, every one of the Resolutions affords abundant proof. Their 32d Resolution proposes an address to the Governor, concluding thus, "*The House think the present moment peculiarly unfavourable for discussions, which may have a tendency to unsettle the minds of the Negro population, which the House have the greatest reason to believe, is at present perfectly quiet and contented.*"

This Resolution was passed in the House of Assembly, December 11, 1823. Mr Buxton's motion was made May 15, so that intelligence of it must have reached Jamaica nearly five months before. The Slaves, therefore, had for five months been acquainted with the proceedings in the British Parliament, and still their minds remained *perfectly quiet and contented*. Again, the present moment, says the House of Assembly, is *peculiarly unfavourable for discussions, &c.* and, therefore, they at once plunge into discussions of the most inflammatory nature. But why was that moment *peculiarly unfavourable*? Because the minds of the Slaves were then perfectly quiet and contented. We must, therefore, take it as the recorded opinion of the House of Assembly, that times of tranquillity are peculiarly unsuited for discussion, and that periods of insurrection and civil war are peculiarly adapted for temperate discussion and moderate decisions.

A LETTER

TO THE

HON. W. T. H. FOX STRANGWAYS,

Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,

ON THE PRESENT

STATE OF THE SLAVE TRADE

IN

THE WEST INDIES,

AND ON THE MEANS OF

MORE EFFECTUALLY COUNTERACTING IT.

BY

CAPTAIN FAIR, R. N. K. H.

LONDON :

RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

1838.

TO THE

HON. WM. FOX STRANGWAYS,

ETC. ETC. ETC.

SIR,

THE late important Debates in the Houses of Subject. Parliament, and the intense feeling and anxiety manifested throughout the country on the subject of the Slave Trade, induce me to submit for your consideration one or two suggestions and practical remarks on that Question. And as the discussions to which I allude have had more Slave Trade between Western Africa and the West Indies. immediate reference to the trade carried on under the Spanish flag to the island of Cuba, and to its probable extension to the Texas, I shall confine my observations to the Slave Trade carried on between the western coast of Africa and the West Indies.

My reasons for directing your attention so exclusively to the Slave Trade of the West Indies, are founded not only on the great increase of that traffic, the causes of which will be shewn

hereafter, but are founded also upon the very great difficulties in the way of stopping it by measures to be taken on the African coast alone; difficulties arising partly from climate, partly from other causes.

It is unnecessary for me to enter into a description of the vessels employed in this nefarious traffic, or of the cruelties inflicted on the unfortunate Africans, or of the privations which they undergo on their passage from the coast of Africa until their arrival in the West Indies; they have already been eloquently and pathetically exposed by a noble and learned Lord, whose powerful talents have long been exerted in behalf of the African and the Slave.

Tracks of
Slavers in-
tended for
the West
Indies.

The route or track of slavers from the coast of Africa depends on circumstances, and perhaps the same vessel does not follow the same course on a second voyage. It is a fixed maxim with the commanders of slavers, as it is the first article in their instructions, to avoid by every means being seen, or communicated with, by a stranger; this caution, together with the variableness of the wind and the season of the year, render it uncertain what part of the West Indies they first make, or on what parallel of latitude they run down their westing.

Some make the West Indian islands far to the southward, about Trinidad and the island of Grenada, and shaping their course to the westward

run down to the southward of St. Domingo, round the little island of Navassa, branch over towards St. Jago de Cuba, and make that part of the coast; others, continuing their westward course, pass to the southward of Jamaica and the Pedro shoal, haul up and make the Caymans; then stand across for the Isle of Pines or Cape Antonio, as the winds permit or as their fancy dictates; others run farther to the westward, and make the Swan Islands, before they haul to the northward, when, probably, they make Cape Catouch, the south-east point of the Gulf of Mexico.

Many, and perhaps the greater number, before they reach the West Indies, keep well to the northward; make St. Thomas's or Porto Rico, when if the coast is clear, as it generally is, they stand boldly in, and not unfrequently have communication by signal, or otherwise, with the shore; thence continuing their course, they run along the north side of St. Domingo, pass between the islands of Tortuga and Inagua, haul in towards Cape Maize (the eastern point of Cuba), and act according to circumstances. Of those that pass between Tortuga and Inagua, several keep well towards the latter island, and standing on towards Cay Verd, cross the Bahama Bank, and make the land about Matanzas or the reefs to windward. There are others again, who avoid the West Indian Islands altogether, and stretch-

ing far to the northward, run down and make the Island of Abaco (familiarily known by the name of Hole in the Rock), on which there is now a light-house erected. These vessels run through the Providence Channel and stand directly for the Havanna or the Colorades (according to the winds or the appearance of vessels on the coast), having the Bahia Honda and other favourable points for landing, open to them. Vessels following this route are in the immediate and direct track for the Texas; and it is possible and probable that instructions or information may be communicated to them by small vessels, sent from the Havanna for that purpose, to cruise for their arrival off the Bahama Islands. Vessels passing to the southward of Cuba, between Cape Antonio and Cape Catouch, are also in the fair way for Texas; but a glance at the chart will more effectually clear up this point, and give a more correct and perfect view than volumes written on the subject. At the same time, information may be afforded and explanation given by persons who have had the advantage of local experience.

Squadron
to be sta-
tioned for
intercept-
ing the
trade with
Cuba.

Having described the tracks usually followed by slavers in making and passing among the West Indian Islands, either for Cuba or the Texas, I shall proceed to explain the grounds on which I recommend that a squadron should be stationed for the express purpose of intercepting

slavers off the island of Cuba. It is notorious that Cuba is now the great mart for slaves, that Texas is soon but too likely to rival it; and Cuba, lying exactly in the course to Texas, it follows, that if you effectually stop the former, you stop both of the greatest slave marts in the West Indies and the Gulf of Mexico.

The necessity for a small squadron being devoted expressly to the watching and intercepting slavers is also proved by the good look-out which is kept, and the facilities for landing which are afforded, by the well organized arrangements of the slave dealers, as shewn by their letters, (a translation of one of which I beg to subjoin); and it is further confirmed by the fact, that during the time the effective part of the squadron was called off to blockade Carthagena, many thousand slaves were landed in Cuba without the possibility of preventing it.

*Translation of a letter to Don Miguel Palou,
Captain of the Goleta Carlota.*

“ Ajuda (Coast of Africa), October 11, 1836.

“ Honoured Sir,—To-morrow, if the weather be favourable, the cargo of the vessel under your command is to be put on board, and the moment that this is done, and that you have received the mail, you will weigh anchor and set sail for the place of your destination, which hereinafter I

Precautionary System put in force by slave dealers.

Letter shewing it

shall point out to you. You know that the steersman, Don Antonio Rioz, receives seventy dollars per month, and three dollars a-head, and that the third mate, Don J. Parneso, is to have four hundred dollars, for good and all; bear these particulars in mind when the time of paying them at the Havanna arrives. You will also give a memorandum of this to your consignee there, Sen. de Zangroniz, that he may be informed of the date at which the remainder of the crew embarked.

“ I presume there is no occasion to recommend to you the greatest vigilance respecting the vessels you encounter, and that you ought to consider as enemies all the sails you meet with. I likewise would have you endeavour to live on good terms with your officers and crew, and to treat your passengers with great civility, as such behaviour will not only be for your interest but also for ours.

“ The point of your destination being one of the southern ports of the Isle of Cuba, that are nearest to the Havanna, you will, on making the land, stand for the port of Jago, and sailing along the coast call at the Cayo Rockos or at Casones Bay, where you will meet with a medical man. When you get there, you will hoist a blue flag on the foremast by way of signal to the said medical practitioner; and should he chance to be absent when you make the signal, you will

without delay, but with the greatest precaution, steer along the rocks and shoals to the Creek of Majana, and dispatch from thence a message to Don Gregorio Manandez, in his coffee plantation, and desire him to inform immediately Don Y. M. Zangroniz of the arrival of your vessel; yourself will also address a letter to that gentleman to acquaint him with the number, quality, and condition of the cargo on board your ship; you must deliver the letters to no one but Mr. Zangroniz himself, or to the person sent by him to receive the cargo, in case he should not be able to come himself. When the vessel makes Majana, you will endeavour to land the cargo with the greatest expedition, going on shore either yourself or sending the mate, enjoining him to take care of the cargo until the arrival of Mr. Zangroniz, or of whom he may depute. Should you, from being pursued, or meeting some other untoward accident, not be able to put into Cayo Piedros, you must run for the Paso de Rosario or for the Cayo Francis. If you cannot land at any of these three points, you must disembark where it may seem most proper, governing yourself by the state of your provisions, water, and condition of the vessel; only take notice, that wherever you land the cargo, you are to send instantly an express to Havanna to apprise Mr. de Zangroniz of the place of your disembarkation, and of the state of your cargo.

If you cannot reach Majana, go as near Havana as you can, provided always that thereby the interests of the expedition be not endangered.

“ I wish you a short and prosperous voyage, and that the result of it may answer your expectations.

“ Believe me to be your friend and servant,
“ J. G. ZANGRONIZ, Jun.”

From the tenor of the above instructions it is evident that a system is established and previous arrangements made by the slave dealers to meet almost every exigency or difficulty. For the purpose of checking the Slave Trade, and of striking terror into those who embark in it, by capturing their vessels on their outward and homeward voyage, I should propose that a squadron, efficient as well in point of number as of sailing qualities, be stationed off the Island of Cuba, forming a cordon or line of communication with each other, and arranged, if possible, so that the slaver, flying from one cruiser, would in all probability be forced to run into the jaws of another, and her capture thus rendered almost certain. The very demonstration would be the means of closing up the insurance offices. But the force employed on this service ought to be a specific, distinct force, and for that particular

purpose, not to be *withdrawn*, except upon the most urgent occasion ; in fact, a little Bahama squadron.

The proximity of Jamaica renders Port Royal the most convenient station for the supplies, and for refitting the vessels employed on this service, at the same time it would be desirable that a small supply of such stores as may appear the most frequently to be required, should be kept at Nassau (New Providence), thereby rendering a long absence from the north side of Cuba unnecessary, which must be the case if the cruisers have to proceed to Port Royal.

Stations
for sup-
plies to t
intercept
ing squa-
dron.

The description of vessels best adapted for this service are the fast-sailing corvettes, brigs, and schooners, such as are now built by Sir Wm. Symonds. Some of the vessels at present employed are admirably adapted to this purpose, as well from their superior sailing qualities as from their capacity of stowage. I would name the Champion, Racer, and Wanderer, but as these vessels are often detached and sent upon other important services, they cannot, properly speaking, be considered as cruisers attached to the Island of Cuba.

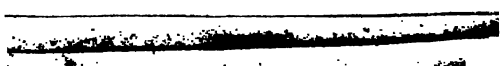
In a letter addressed by Mr. Tolmé (the British Consul at Havanna) to the Foreign Office, he gives it as his opinion that a force should be attached to that station ; an efficient force, and that it should be kept constantly *on* that station.

I perfectly agree with Mr. Tolmé. At the period when the Vestal and Champion were so successful in making captures, and when the Racer was actively and successfully cruising off Havanna, the terror and dismay among the slave dealers was so great, that a stop was put to all equipment, and the insurance companies refused to underwrite. A very short time, however, elapsed before the whole of the force was withdrawn for the purpose of blockading Carthagera and the coast of New Granada, and for some months not a cruiser was to be seen near the coast of Cuba. Great was in consequence the rejoicing at Havanna, St. Jago de Cuba, and in the other ports, and the departures for the coast of Africa, as well as the arrivals, were greater than ever.

Force of
the pro-
posed in-
tercepting
Squadron.

I should, therefore, propose that a force of not less than ten vessels be appointed for this particular service, say, six corvettes, or brigs, two brigantines, and two schooners; the latter of light draught of water, might chase and cruise on the Bahama Bank; one or two steamers may also be employed here with advantage. It may be presumed, that of the ten sail, not more than eight would be constantly on the cruising ground; two may be considered as refitting or completing their provisions and water.

In stationing the different vessels of the squadron, I should (on the South of Cuba) place—



1. To cruise off the Island of Navassa, as a ^{Stations} check to vessels coming down to the south- ^{for the} ward of St. Domingo, and making towards ^{Squadron.} St. Jago de Cuba.

2nd. To cruise from or near St. Jago de Cuba towards Cape Cruz.

3rd. (A brigantine or schooner) from Cape Cruz towards the Isle of Pines, looking after Trinidad de Cuba, and the Rosario Channel, and

4th. To cruise from the Isle of Pines to Cape Antonio and Cape Catouch, and looking towards the Caymans.

This station might be looked upon as the southern entrance for vessels bound to the Texas.

ON THE NORTH SIDE.

1. Between the Islands Tortuga and Inagua, sighting Cape Maize and the west end of St. Domingo.

2nd. To cruise from Cape Maize towards Cayo Moa, Cayo Verd, and Point Mulos.

3rd. (A brigantine or schooner) within Point Mulos, on the edge of the Bank, to intercept vessels crossing the Bank within Cayo St. Domingo ; and

4th. Off Havanna, stretching eastwards towards Matanzas; westward towards Bahia Honda, and the Colorades, and looking towards the Tortugas.

This station may be considered the northern entrance into the Gulf of Mexico, and consequently in the line to Texas. A second cruiser might here be advantageously stationed, and if the ten sail appointed to this service had orders mutually to support each other, on all occasions, and to communicate with each other, by signal or otherwise, when convenient, I have no doubt, that such information might be obtained, and such arrangements made by the Senior Officer, as would enable him to place a second vessel on the ground, should it be deemed necessary.

When I consider the amount of Naval force on the West Indian and North American station for the last few years; the number of vessels required to communicate with Carthagena, Santa Martha and Chagres, the necessity of having a ship occasionally to visit Honduras, as well as looking to our interests at Vera Cruz and Tampico; of dispatching ships at certain periods for the protection of our commerce and fisheries in the Bay of Fundy, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and Newfoundland; when I consider this distribution, I feel that but very few, if any, vessels can be spared for the purpose of cruising constantly and effectually against the slave-traders, although I am fully convinced of the great interest felt by the Commanders-in Chief on that station, in the suppression and annihilation of this inhuman traffic. I am, therefore, of

~~opinion~~, that to produce a decided effect, it would require a force of, at least, four sloops, (corvettes or brigs) and two schooners, or brigantines, in addition to that usually employed on the West Indian station. This force, which would be actively and usefully employed, would require an increase of little more than six hundred men; the crew of a small line of battle ship.

It is foreign to the object of this communication to give an opinion, how far this number of men could be supplied by the existing Naval force of the country, but it being no longer deemed necessary to keep a frigate stationary at Port Royal, the appropriation of her establishment, would materially assist in promoting the object in view.

To check the Slave trade off St. Thomas's Danish Island of St. Thomas. much delicacy is required. The Danes are very jealous of territorial infringement. The commerce of St. Thomas's is certainly very much increased, and chiefly exists by the profits arising from the transhipment of articles fitted and manufactured at Glasgow, and at other towns in the United Kingdom, for the African market; in fact, St. Thomas's is a general depot, as it is a free port; and it may not be exaggeration, if I were to say, that the greater part, if not the whole of the supplies furnished at the Island of St. Thomas's to the African slave-

dealers, is of British manufacture. The Danish Government naturally encourages the trade of its islands, nor can we, in fairness to our commerce, ask them to exclude from entry at their Custom-house, or reception into their warehouses and stores, the manufactures of Great Britain—hence, the difficulty of preventing vessels intended for the slave trade, making rendezvous, and fitting out at St. Thomas's. There are few branches of trade, or lines of commerce, in which an illicit traffic is not forced, and the strictest fiscal regulations evaded, but this might be checked to a considerable extent, by an increase of vigilance on our part; and the Danish Government might, by remonstrance, be induced more emphatically to denounce the slave trade and to prevent altogether (what, I fear, has been in some degree the practice) the conniving at the granting of fictitious clearances and false papers to vessels belonging to other nations employed in this traffic. Thus a check may, at least, be given to this open and apparent violation of treaty. The Danes have in general one or two brigs of war at St. Thomas's; and perhaps a well timed representation to their Government might have the effect of urging their cruisers to a little more exertion.

Spanish
Island of
Porto Rico. Off Porto Rico, a vessel ought certainly to be stationed, and I am of opinion, that the

Barbadoes division of the ordinary West India squadron might afford a ship for that purpose, presuming as I do, that the constant presence of a frigate in Carlisle Bay, may be deemed no longer necessary.

From the activity displayed by Captain Jones, lately commanding the *Vestal*, and his great success while cruising off Grenada, the necessity of continuing to keep one or two fast sailing ships on that part of the station is evident. The force usually stationed there can effectually guard the southern passage near Trinidad, &c.

I have before alluded to the facilities for escape afforded to the slave vessels in passing near the Bahama Islands, and across the Bank. In looking at the chart you will observe that the Bahama Islands, many in number, are a chain extending (from abreast of about the middle of St. Domingo) in a north-west direction, to the Gulf of Florida, forming, as it were, a sort of breast-work or break-water, on the north side of the Bahama Bank, between which and the north side of Cuba, lies the Bahama Channel. Several of these islands are thinly inhabited by a poor and rude people, ignorant of the laws respecting the Slave trade, or that any crime is committed in affording assistance to those employed in carrying it on. In describing the route of slave-
Bahama
Islands.

the Bahama Bank. It is well known to those who have taken an interest in, and have made enquiry, respecting the manner in which this traffic is carried on in the West Indies, that slave vessels frequently anchor under and near to the different Bahama Islands, sometimes for the purpose of procuring supplies, often to receive information as to where our cruisers are stationed, as well as to take on board pilots, to conduct them through the Islands and across the Bank ; and it is notorious, that the slave dealers, and Insurance Companies in Cuba, send vessels to rendezvous off certain of the Bahama Islands, for the purpose of giving information, or instructions, to slave vessels expected home.

Light-
houses.

Lighthouses have lately been erected on some of the Bahama Islands ; one on Gun Cay, and another on the Island of Abaco. These lights render the navigation of the sea more secure, but, at the same time, they afford to the slave trader, the facility of running with a greater degree of certainty in the night. I have also stated, that vessels coming to the northward of St. Domingo, often stand towards Inagua. They have been frequently known to anchor under that Island, (sometimes for shelter, at other times to screen themselves lest a cruiser should happen to be at the other side) and, waiting until the approach of night, effect their escape across the Bank, or to some of the numerous ports

in the north-east end of Cuba; on this Island (Inagua) I should establish a *Signal Post*, for the purpose of apprising British cruisers of the vicinity of slavers. But it is not on the Island of Inagua alone that I would erect a signal post. I would establish one also on the Island of Caycos, the entrance to what is called the windward passage; one on Crooked Island, where we have at present a Post office, and one on each of those Islands where lighthouses are erected. These signal posts would be particularly useful, for while they would give notice to our cruisers, the knowledge of their existence would alarm and prevent the slavers from approaching the shore.

In addition to the Naval force already recommended, and the establishing of signal posts, I am of opinion that a powerful *moral force* may be called into existence and brought forward as a collateral aid in the suppression of this vile traffic. It is not necessary for me to enter into detail, and I shall therefore condense my notions on the subject as much as possible, satisfied that you will at once comprehend the nature of my views, and that your better judgment will decide, as to its propriety and usefulness.

The whole of the Bahama Islands are under the laws and dominion of Great Britain; in fact, are a part of our Colonies. The Slave trade (as well as the aiding and abetting those who are

engaged in it) is expressly forbidden by Act of Parliament. Any slave vessel touching at, or anchoring in, the harbour of Port Royal, would instantly be seized, and taken possession of. Why not also throughout the Bahamas? I should therefore recommend a Proclamation to be issued by the Governor of the Bahamas, and addressed to the inhabitants of these islands, pointing out to them that they would subject themselves to heavy penalties, and incur her Majesty's displeasure, by continuing to act in violation of the Act of Parliament. It should also call upon the inhabitants to aid, by every means in their power, in the detection and capture of slave vessels; by giving information to her Majesty's cruisers, as well as by communicating with his Excellency the Governor, or with any other public authority, through whose assistance information might be conveyed, and the capture of such vessel promoted. A small reward might be offered as an inducement and encouragement. This Proclamation should be drawn up with great care, so as, if possible, to engage the interests of the inhabitants, and more especially of the wreckers and pilots. I should recommend its being printed, as well in the Spanish as in the English language; to be widely circulated and distributed, not in the Bahamas alone, but throughout the island of Cuba also. For if we can but make the inhabitants of Cuba believe

Proclamation to be issued, and circulated in the West Indies.

that their neighbours, the Bahama people, are interested in the capture of their vessels, the proprietors and speculators, as well as the insurance companies, will naturally feel less disposed to incur any risk. This Proclamation, enlisting the feelings of the people in carrying it into effect, together with the establishing of signal-posts upon the points already mentioned, would, in my opinion, be the means of giving a powerful check to the Slave Trade, and would discourage to such a degree the present open mode in which it is carried on, by altering or breaking up the existing interests, that it would lead ultimately to its annihilation; this object being equally, if not better gained, by deterring the fitting out of slavers, than by their capture.

Perhaps it may not be too much if I were, while on this part of the subject, to solicit your attention to the locality of the Great Bahama island, situated to the north-west of New Providence (the seat of Government.) It is nearly sixty miles in extent, and contains much good and valuable timber (chiefly cedar) and fresh water. This island is, I believe, uninhabited; but the people from Nassau, and the neighbouring islands, frequently visit it, for the purpose of cutting timber. Might not this island be made available as a *depôt* for the reception of negroes, emancipated at Havanna, instead of placing them on board the Romney, a rather invidious object

Great Bahama Island: us to be made of it.

in that harbour? The distance from Havanna, or from Nassau, to the Great Bahama, is short, and the passage either way tolerably certain.

Great Inagua Island.

To the south-east of Nassau (to windward) is another island—the Great Inagua—about fifty miles long, with but very few, if any, *fixed* inhabitants on it. A great part of it is susceptible of cultivation; it possesses two anchorages, one on either side of the island, and a supply of fresh water. The shores of this island abound with turtle and other fish. Here the negroes might be landed, and, placed under proper superintendence, might be usefully and healthfully employed in clearing and improving the island, until the period of their being finally disposed of. They could work, and bathe, and recover their health with their liberty, instead of being liable to undergo an additional and perilous voyage back to Africa; with reference to which I shall hereafter make a few observations.

It is unnecessary for me to point out to one so well acquainted with the working of existing treaties as you are, the many difficulties and impediments thrown in the way of her Majesty's cruisers, in carrying into effect their orders and their wishes; but the country at large seem to be ignorant of the fact, that her Majesty's Government have hitherto been unable to induce other Governments to enter into treaties whereby our cru'sers would be authorised and empowered

effectually to act against *all* vessels suspected of being engaged in the Slave Trade. I have been not a little surprised at the want of knowledge of the limited effect of existing treaties, shewn and expressed by many, who, from their station and learning, ought to have known better. No treaty can be carried into effect until after it has been submitted to Parliament: and yet we have heard complaints made against the conduct of the officers in command of her Majesty's cruisers, on certain occasions, when it ought to have been evident that they could not have had instructions to act in the manner required of them by those who have charged them with want of zeal in the execution of their duty; when as yet no *treaty*, authorising her Majesty's Government to issue such instructions, had been laid before Parliament.

According to the treaties at present existing, vessels under the flag of Portugal may fit out, at any of the ports in the West Indies (except British ports), and sail whither they please, completely equipped for the Slave Trade; and it was not until June, 1835, that we were able to prevail on the Spaniards to submit to the detention of vessels under their flag, when equipped or fitted in a certain manner, as explained in that treaty. Vessels sailing under the *Portuguese* flag we dare not interrupt, unless they have the slaves actually on board; or have had them,

on the same voyage on which we fall in with them.

To visit a French ship, you must have a commission from the French admiralty ; nor can any of her Majesty's ships, not having the French commission (and it is granted only to a certain extent, and to be acted upon only within certain limits), examine or search a ship or vessel under the French flag.

United States of America.

We have no Slave Trade treaty with the United States of America ; and although a great number of the American vessels, employed and trading in the West Indies, are of the class and description usually employed by the Spaniards and Portuguese in the Slave Trade, we have not the power or right of searching them : nay, more, there is a jealousy shewn, and often expressed, if our cruisers fire a gun, to induce them to hoist their colours, and shew their nationality.

Quarantine attempted to be enforced in Cuba on vessels bringing in Slaves.

And here I must be permitted to express my obligations for the direct and effectual support afforded me by her Majesty's Government in remonstrating against and resisting the Quarantine, attempted to be enforced by the authorities of Cuba upon her Majesty's cruisers bringing slaves into Havanna.* The abrogation of that Quarantine is a point of great importance gained for the efficiency of this special service ; for it renders the cruisers on that station more

* Vide Slave Trade Papers, A. 1836. p. 140, 149, 159, 212.

free to act, and consequently more efficient: and it is due to the Foreign Office to say, that Lord Palmerston and Mr. Villiers, by their prompt and spirited interference and representation, have taught the authorities and slave-dealers of Havanna, that her Britannic Majesty's ships and officers are entitled to a certain degree of consideration and respect, which they were previously not in the habit of receiving. The correspondence on this point has been laid before Parliament, and is worth reading, as shewing the light in which the inhabitants of Cuba view all those who are directly interested or employed in putting down the Slave Trade.

From what I have already said with respect to the American flag, it is clear, that her Majesty's ships have no authority to interfere with vessels belonging to the United States;—yet it is notorious that the United States supply vessels, expressly built and fitted up for that trade; and that several of these, under that flag, have recently arrived at Havanna, and sailed from that port for the coast of Africa. It is also a known fact, that cargoes of negroes have been purchased at, and taken from Cuba, for the United States, (the Americans averring, that the negroes are free under their flag). Representation to the Government of the United States, may, possibly, shame them into a relinquishment of such sordid cupidity; but it is evident that, under exist-

American
Trade.

ing treaties, our ships are not authorised to interfere.

New Treaty with Spain.

The late Slave Trade treaty, concluded with Spain (June 28, 1835) affords great facilities towards checking the Slave Trade under the Spanish flag;—but, although the greatest care and attention seem to have been observed in wording, and in drawing up that treaty, means have still been found for evading the most important (the equipment) article; and I shall instance a case, not giving an opinion, but adducing a fact.

Case of the General Laborde.*

Her Majesty's sloop *Champion*, under my command, detained, and sent into Havanna for adjudication, the Spanish schooner, *General Laborde*, which vessel had succeeded in landing her cargo of slaves, a few days before, near Trinidad de Cuba, and was on her way to Havanna (the port from which she originally sailed on her voyage to the coast of Africa, and to which she belonged), when fallen in with by the *Champion*. She was complete in her equipment; slave deck laid (not even cleaned since the landing of her cargo); shackles, bolts, irons, &c. on board; and was, in fact, a well known and fortunate slaver belonging to the Havanna. The Commissioners had not received the new treaty lately concluded with Spain, though they knew of its existence. The case, therefore, was brought into court under the additional article

* Vide Slave Trade Papers, 1835. A. p. 212.

of 1822, which says, "That if there shall be
 " clear and undeniable proof that a slave or
 " slaves has or have been put on board a vessel
 " for the purpose of illegal traffic, in the par-
 " ticular voyage on which the vessel shall be
 " captured; then, and on that account . . . such
 " vessel . . . shall be detained . . . and con-
 " demned." The Commissioners could not be
 satisfied that there was clear and undeniable
 proof of her having been engaged in the Slave
 Trade on that particular voyage, although no
 doubt existed of the fact of her being a slaver;
 and it must have been clear to any person choos-
 ing to visit the vessel, that she had recently had
 slaves on board. The sentence of the Court ne-
 cessarily was—That the captors had failed in
 their proof, as far as regarded the voyage on
 which she had been detained: that the detention
 was therefore illegal; and the captor was con-
 demned to damages, to be estimated by the
 Court.

Two days after this decision, the Commis-
 sioners received the new treaty with Spain.

A few months after, the Pincher, commanded
 by Lieut. Byng, fell in with the same schooner,
 the General Laborde, on a fresh, and outward
 voyage, with the articles of equipment for Slave
 Trade on board, and on the top, a quantity of
 tobacco, and other sorts of merchandize, ex-
 pressly adapted for the African market. Lieut.

Difficulty
 of deter-
 mining a
 legal voy-
 age.

Byng very properly detained her, and sent her into Havanna for adjudication. By the treaty alluded to, vessels detained under what is termed the Equipment Article, if it be proved that certain things, as therein described, were found on board, are condemned and confiscated; "unless satisfactory evidence, upon the part of the master or owners, shall establish that such vessel was, at the time of her detention or capture, employed in some legal pursuit;" and in such case, the captor, or detaining vessel, is not to be subject to demurrage or damages. The master of the General Laborde made oath, that he was bound to Cadiz, on a legal voyage; and his vessel was liberated.

The proceedings in this case were as follows: The British Judge, in the absence of "satisfactory evidence," decided, that the General Laborde ought to be condemned; the Spanish Judge decided that she ought to be set free: the case, according to treaty,* was referred to an arbitrator, to be chosen by lot from two persons, of whom one was a British, the other a Spanish subject. The arbitrator on whom the lot fell was a Spaniard; and he decreed the liberation of the vessel.

Practical experience sometimes detects errors and omissions; and the treaty would be perfect if the exception to the tenth, or equipment

* Vide New Spanish Treaty of 1835, Annex. B, Art. 4.

article, were, as recommended* by the Commissioners, omitted altogether; and if, as they also suggest, the words, “any other aliment whatsoever,” were introduced into it, so as to include biscuit, which is shipped in great quantities for the negroes, but not comprehended in the article as it now stands. It would then no longer be left to the owners to make it appear, to the questionable satisfaction of the Court, that the materials of equipment were absolutely requisite and necessary for the legitimate prosecution of her assumed voyage. And it is to be observed that Cadiz, owing to the prevalent winds, is but little out of the best track from Cuba to the coast of Africa.

But while by this treaty you actually check, and might almost annihilate the Slave Trade, under the Spanish flag, all that you had reason to hope for is not accomplished. The readiness with which the Portuguese flag has been pros-
 tituted; the facility afforded for transferring
 colours and papers from Spanish to Portuguese
 ships; only changes the flag, without diminish-
 ing the number of vessels. Nor is the transfer
 confined to the flag of Portugal alone: I regret
 to say, that even that of Russia is so debased:—
 some of the minor Northern states have also,
 formerly, lent their flag to carry on this de-

Portu-
 guese
 Slave
 Trade.

* Vide Slave Trade Papers, A. 1837, p. 93; and New Spanish Treaty, 1835, Art. 10, end.

testable traffic; but now that we have induced those powers to enter into treaties, allowing British cruisers to detain their vessels when engaged in the Slave Trade; the exertions of our Government, it is to be hoped, will be more successful in eradicating the evil.

Vessels of an inferior description have lately been introduced into the Slave Trade, and chiefly under the Portuguese flag, which, from their size and dimensions, increase the hardships, and sufferings of the slaves, on their passage from the coast of Africa. In December, 1836, the Champion captured off the Isle of Pines, a Portuguese schooner, the *Carlota*, of about sixty tons burthen, as stated in her papers, and probably of Spanish measurement. In the report of her case, transmitted by the Court of Mixed Commissioners at Sierra Leone, she is described as of eighty tons, and certainly did not exceed that tonnage. She had more the appearance of a coasting schooner with simply her fore and aft sails, than of a vessel intended for a foreign voyage; no topmasts, nor any thing to indicate a stranger. She had on board, two hundred and three Africans, (say) ninety men, forty-eight women, forty boys, and twenty-five girls, these children being from seven and eight, to eleven years of age. You cannot form an idea of the state of suffering, to which these poor creatures were reduced. The vessel was

Case of the
Carlota,
suffering of
Negroes.

so very leaky and unseaworthy, that it was with much difficulty she reached Belize, in fact she was so rotten and unsafe, that before her condemnation arrived *from Sierra Leone*, (to which place I was obliged to send the master and part of the crew for her adjudication) the Carlota sunk at her anchors in Belize harbour. She sold afterwards for only *eleven* pounds. Such are the vessels employed in Slave Trade.

In mentioning the case of the Carlota, I cannot refrain from alluding to the kind and ready acquiescence of Major Anderson, (the then superintendent of Honduras at Belize) in my request, that the slaves might be landed at Belize, and placed under British protection. The prompt and admirable arrangements made by him, and the assistance rendered by Captain Dickinson, are honourable to their humanity and judgment, and I am confident will ever be gratefully remembered by the slaves. And here I cannot avoid recording a little anecdote which strongly points out, (in contradiction to all that has been written, or said, of the want of mental capacity in the African race) that the feelings of affection and respect are not confined to the whites alone.

I should mention, that in chasing the Carlota, we had occasion to fire several shots at her, before she brought to; and on our taking possession of her, the Africans appeared to be fully sensible

of their change of condition and liberation. The whole of the slaves were quite naked, but through the kindness of Major Anderson, frocks, and petticoats and other necessary articles of clothing were quickly provided for them, and we were enabled to land the whole of them, the day after our arrival at Belize. I have said, that of the number of slaves on board the *Carlota*, twenty-five were girls, from seven or eight, to about eleven years of age. It appeared, that soon after their embarkation on the coast, the master of the vessel presented each of them with two or three little beads; no doubt to amuse, and in some degree pacify them for the loss of their country, their relatives, and friends. It happened that among the number of these little children, there was one on whom they all looked with peculiar kindness and regard. Previously to their being landed, the whole of the girls subscribed the beads that had been given to them on their departure from the coast, and stringing them together into a large necklace, and bracelets, presented them to, and placed them round the neck and arms of their little favourite. The gratifying sight of all these children leaving the slave vessel, and coming towards the shore—their song of joy in the boat—their merry faces and happy countenances, and their placing this interesting little child, decked with their affectionate offerings, at their head, when they landed,

it is impossible to describe, and I shall never forget it; she was much scarred and marked in the face, but she had an intelligent and interesting countenance. It may be, that she was the child of a person of worth and distinction in her own country, at all events, she was looked upon with affection and deference by her young companions. All these little girls were taken charge of by the ladies of the several families in Belize, and I had the satisfaction to see, before I quitted that harbour, many of them well, and even handsomely clothed and fondly cherished, in the families of the military officers, and merchants of that town. It was most gratifying to me to learn a few days ago, from Captain Dickinson, who lately returned from Belize, that all these children evinced a great capacity and aptitude for learning, that they were affectionate and docile, most excellent domestic servants, and that the whole of the slaves landed from the Carlota, were considered as a great acquisition in the settlement.

In alluding to the General Laborde, I ventured to suggest a mode by which a legal voyage might be more satisfactorily and clearly defined. I have experienced a difficulty, and felt a doubt in another case, for which I find no provision made in any of the treaties, and to which I beg leave to call your attention.

By referring to the papers laid before Par-

liament by the Foreign Office, in the correspondence with the British Commissioners at Havanna, relating to the Slave Trade,* it will appear, that on the 7th December, 1835, Her Majesty's sloop, *Champion*, captured the Spanish schooner, *Diligencia*, with slaves on board; that the vessel in order to escape the *Champion*, ran on shore on the Island of Cuba, near Point de Mulos, and that four of the crew, taking with them sixteen negroes, got safely off with the boat, and effected their escape. The *Champion*, however, succeeded in getting the schooner off, with one hundred and thirty-one slaves, and carried her into Havanna, where she was condemned, and the slaves liberated.

Case of the
Diligencia.

Case of the
Ricomar.

On the 2nd March, 1836, the *Champion* fell in with the Spanish brig, *Ricomar*, which vessel also ran on shore on the Island of Cuba, near Cayo Moa, and that the *Champion* succeeded in getting her off also, and in saving one hundred and eighty-eight slaves. Although the *Champion* was very near to the *Ricomar* at the time she took the ground, (within gun-shot) and that the boats were instantly dispatched, yet the master and a part of the crew of the slaver effected their escape, forcing a great number of the slaves overboard, to swim to the shore. As many as thirty-two of these wretched beings thus thrust

* Class A. No. 134, page 200. 1835.

† Class A. No. 93, page 144. 1836.

overboard, (*all of them females*) were drowned between the vessel and the shore, though the distance was not above two hundred yards.

The *Champion* having chased, I had no hesitation in following it up, and taking possession of the vessel, though on the Spanish shore. A great many persons were assembled on the beach, some of them armed, and in number sufficient to prevent an inferior force from acting. Our boats were, however, under cover of our guns. I had very great difficulty in getting the *Ricomar* afloat, and it required the greatest exertions, on the part of the officers and men, for many hours, to accomplish it. I felt some little anxiety how I ought to act in the event of our efforts to get the slaver off, proving ineffectual. The slaves, I could take into the *Champion*, but how was I to deal with the vessel? I certainly should have destroyed her—doubts were expressed at the Havanna as to the propriety of my conduct, if I had done so, and much was said about landing an armed force on the shores of Cuba, but, as I succeeded in getting the vessel off, with the slaves on board, and in obtaining her condemnation at Havanna, and as, through the active and zealous co-operation and assistance of Mr. Macleay, I had a very strong remonstrance preferred to the Captain General, having for its object the apprehension and recovery of those slaves that had been landed, the matter was

allowed to remain without any official notice being taken of it.

Case of a
chased
Vessel get-
ting ashore
on the
Spanish
Coast.

The question then, to which I should beg to direct your attention, is this. All doubt being removed as to the character of the vessel, slaves having actually been found on board her; in the event of its proving impossible to get her afloat, and off the shore, in consequence of night coming on, the unfavourable state of the winds, or weather, or even, of her being partially injured, should I have been justified in destroying her, her tackle, &c.? Having to provide for the safety, and comfort of the slaves, I could not remain near the slaver on shore; but must proceed to a port of adjudication, and, if I did not destroy the vessel, the Spaniards might possibly, the next morning, get her afloat, and fit her out for a new voyage.

That which has happened to me twice, may occur to some other cruiser, when he may not be able to get the vessel off. Is it not then, a point upon which a decided opinion, or instruction would be desirable? If left unsettled, it may produce collision between the inhabitants of Cuba, and our officers and men employed in the destruction of such vessels; or it may be the source of much altercation, and of interminable correspondence.

While on the subject of Treaties, I shall venture to allude to another point, to which I attach

some importance; namely, the disposal of the crews of slave vessels, captured under the Portuguese flag.

Disposal of Crews of Slave Vessels, taken under the flag of Portugal.

In the Treaty lately concluded with Spain, for the suppression of the Slave Trade, provision is made for the security and disposal of the crews of slave vessels, captured under the Spanish flag. The vessel is taken into Havanna, and the crew handed over to the Spanish authorities.

In the event of the capture or detention of a slave vessel under the Portuguese flag, she ought, according to existing treaties, to be sent for adjudication either to Sierra Leone, or to Rio Janeiro. We find, that slaves found on board such vessels in the West Indies, have (of necessity) been invariably landed at Nassau, or at some of the British Islands; but in such a case, I do not recollect that any arrangement is made by treaty, for the maintenance or disposal of the crew. In the case of the *Carlota*, Portuguese schooner, before alluded to, and carried into Belize, a great difficulty presented itself. The vessel was found on survey not to be sea-worthy. The master and two of the crew were kept on board the *Champion* for a length of time, until an opportunity offered of sending them to Sierra Leone, before the mixed Commission at that Port, when sentence of condemnation of the vessel, and emancipation of the slaves was recorded. The remainder of the

crew was got rid of, from time to time, but they occasioned considerable expense, trouble, and inconvenience. They could not be landed at Belize, for in that case they might become an expense and burden on the settlement of Honduras ; nor could they be put on board Merchant vessels, among other reasons, lest those ships should thereby become subject to quarantine. They would not be received at Cuba, nor was any provision made for their reception into any of our own Islands, or Colonies. I allude to this case, because I understand that we are about to enter into a new Treaty with Portugal and other States; and it appears to me, that some specific arrangement might be made with these powers, for the maintenance and disposal of the crews of vessels captured under their respective flags, by Her Majesties Cruisers in the West Indies. Prisoners they are not, at least not to the English ; and those Powers have no settlements in the West Indies, where they might be landed. Suppose the case of a vessel detained, having a crew of fifty men. To keep them for months on board an English sloop of war, in the West Indies, destitute of clothes, sickly and dirty as the crews of slavers always are, would be ruinous to the health, as well as to the discipline and safety of the ship; and to send such a number of men to Sierra Leone, would require an equal number to guard them,

and consequently Her Majesty's ship would be left non-effective. To place them on board the Romney would be objectionable in every point of view:—What then is to be done? I shall not presume to point out what may be the best remedy; I am sure that it is sufficient to notice the fact, satisfied, that although no remedy has yet been provided for the evil, it will not escape your vigilance and attention.

But while I refrain from venturing to specify the best remedy, I may be permitted to offer a suggestion or remark. I shall commence by noticing that article in the treaty with Portugal which directs that, “all slave vessels captured under the Portuguese flag shall be sent either to Sierra Leone or Rio Janeiro, for adjudication;” and I shall inquire how far we can apply the operation of that article to slave vessels captured in the West Indies.

At the period when the treaty was entered into, the Slave Trade, under the Portuguese flag, was confined almost exclusively to the Brazils; and the frightful extent to which it is at present carried on in the West Indies, could not have been anticipated. I can readily imagine that the parties to that treaty contemplated no difficulty in the captured vessel reaching either Sierra Leone or Rio Janeiro; but the system recently adopted under the Portuguese flag creates the *necessity* of establishing other courts

to meet the difficulties arising from a return voyage to Sierra Leone—for what is the fact ?

In making a voyage from the coast of Africa to the West Indies, your passage is in a fine climate and warm weather; you traverse the smooth surface of a summer sea. The slave vessels have neither close hatches nor tarpaulin covers: they have, in fact, no occasion for them, a free circulation of air being what they most need; requiring to be protected only from the power of the sun, they sail along, with awnings spread, and generally accomplish their passage to the West Indies in five or six weeks.

When the slave vessel arrives in the West Indies, the unfortunate Africans, reduced in number, emaciated, and debilitated from a close and long confinement, scantiness of food, and a thousand other causes; disease making its appearance among them; provisions and water nearly exhausted, absolutely require to be landed and nursed. To undertake a *return voyage* to Sierra Leone under such circumstances, and in vessels so fitted and equipped, would be madness—it would be impossible. The greatest number of arrivals in the West Indies generally occur in the months of November, December, January and February. To gain easting on the return voyage the vessel would have to proceed through the gulf of Florida, along the coast of America, amidst frost and snow, storm and rain; the

greater number of the slaves naked and crowded together, without medical assistance, would perish from exposure to the cold ; nor could the vessel proceed on her voyage. They have not, as I have before said, covering of any description for the large hatchways, nor any means of excluding either the rain or the sea ; even if they had, they would be useless, for they dare not shut out the air ; the slaves would thus be either suffocated, or drowned.

Imagine for a moment what would be the condition, under such circumstances, of two hundred and three persons in a vessel of about sixty tons, (the *Carlota* for instance) placed so close, as to touch each other ; and thereby prevented from either falling or lying down, and sitting, of necessity, in a stooping posture, the slave deck being little more than two feet eight inches high. But, admitting for a moment the possibility of the vessel reaching Sierra Leone, it would be necessary to land the slaves, for the purpose of cleaning the vessel, and filling up the water, &c. before commencing the return voyage. Where could the slaves be landed ? not at the Havanna ; and if on any of our own West Indian Islands, their immediate emancipation would take place. Under any circumstances it is totally impossible to carry these provisions of the treaty into effect ; in truth, they never have been, because they never could be, acted upon.

It is notorious, that since the conclusion of the new treaty with Spain, in which the equipment article is introduced, the flag of Portugal has, to a very great extent, been substituted for that of Spain, and the greater number of captures in the West Indies made near Cuba. I should therefore propose "That a *New Mixed Commission* Court, for the adjudication of slave vessels captured, or detained under the Portuguese flag, or under the flag of any of the other States before alluded to, or of such of them as have not Colonies in the West Indies, be established at Nassau. (New Providence). Nassau, being to leeward, vessels detained could reach that port with great facility. It would be preferable to Jamaica for various reasons. The introduction of raw negroes, as they are called, direct from Africa, amongst the black population of that island, might at first be attended with unpleasant consequences, as the Africans, on their first arrival, are, from change of food, and the effects of a long voyage, often afflicted with various diseases. This objection would not apply to Nassau, as I believe there is a small island in its vicinity where the negroes might be disembarked to work out their quarantine. Should any objection be made on the part of Portugal, or of the other States, to establish such a court in the West Indies, on account of the expense, or for any other cause, the slaves might be landed at Nassau, as is the

New Mixed Court to be established at Nassau.

case at present, or on Inagua, or Great Bahama, should such an arrangement be considered desirable, under the protection of the British Government. The slave vessel, with the master, and a certain number of the crew, might be sent to London, there to be tried before a Mixed Commission Court, to be established for the purpose of adjudging *all* slave cases. Should it again appear inadvisable that the vessel should be sent to London, a Mixed Commission Court might be established at Plymouth; the British Government appointing a judge or judges, and the Consul of the Power whose flag has been detained, acting as judge on the part of that Power. Consuls under existing Slave Traeties are competent to act as judges in Mixed Commission Courts abroad, in the absence of either of the appointed judges, &c. I believe that all the States have a Consul, or some other accredited agent at Plymouth, so that no material expense need be incurred on their part. To this arrangement I can see no reasonable objection, the consequence would be, that instead of sending our officers and seamen a long and perilous voyage to Sierra Leone, the most unhealthy part of the world, from whence there is no arrangement made to facilitate their return to Europe, and thus weakening the effective force of her Majesty's service, and occasioning the loss of many a valuable life; they would be sent direct

Proposed
Mixed
Court at
London.

Proposed
Mixed
Court at
Plymouth.

to England, where their health would be recruited, and whence they could be sent out immediately to rejoin their ships in the West Indies, or at least remain at the disposal of Government. To annex an article embodying the above suggestions to the existing Treaties, or to adopt them in any new one, would, I feel satisfied, be an act of humanity, advantageous to the slave, and also to the officers and seamen of her Majesty's fleet.

Summary. In recapitulating the substance of the foregoing remarks, I will briefly arrange the points upon which I have touched under the three heads; Naval, Colonial, and Judicial: in order to shew more distinctly the relation which the measures proposed have to the three branches of administration, to which we must look for their adoption.

NAVAL.

I have pointed out the various tracks pursued by slavers in making and passing through the West Indian Islands, and the facilities for landing their cargoes afforded by the well organized arrangements of the slave dealers. As a remedial measure, I have suggested the expediency of stationing a squadron expressly for the interception of slavers off the Island of Cuba, and have shewn how that object will always be

defeated, if the force destined for that purpose be liable to be called off for any other service. I have stated the insufficiency of the number of ships hitherto under the commanders-in-chief on the North American and West Indian station, to supply a sufficient force for the purpose of stopping the trade; and I have pointed out how, among other advantages to be obtained by adopting a different system with regard to the return voyages, a saving of health to the seamen, and of efficiency to the service, may be acquired.

COLONIAL.

I have suggested the placing of signal posts on the Bahama Islands, and the issuing of a proclamation to the inhabitants, as likely to be of importance, and to be useful in checking the Slave trade; and I have pointed out the practicability of using one or other of the Bahamas as a healthy place of depôt for the liberated Africans, the convenience of which I need hardly insist upon.

JUDICIAL.

It is to the Foreign Office that I look with confidence for the amelioration of such points in the Treaties, or in the working of them, which I have ventured to point out. This I have done

with the less scruple, that I have been made practically conversant with their greater or less degree of efficiency, under different circumstances; and I am convinced that it is only necessary to point out to the Foreign Office the defects which exist in parts of the present system, to induce her Majesty's Government to make every practicable effort for their removal. I have therefore remarked on the difficulty of defining a *legal voyage*, under some peculiar circumstances, and have suggested, what I think might be advantageously introduced into, or annexed to, existing Treaties, for the suppression of the Slave Trade. I have submitted an important question, as to the proper mode of dealing with an undoubted slaver when on shore; I have alluded to the insufficiency of the present number of courts, for adjudication; and I have recommended the establishing of others, from which the greatest benefit would result, not only to the slaves themselves, but also to the health and efficiency of her Majesty's ships on the West India station, by allowing a change in the present system of the return voyages.

I am well aware, from the attention you have given to the whole question of the Slave Trade, and from the interest you take in the suppression of that detestable traffic, that you are much more competent than I can be, to suggest means

for more effectually enforcing its suppression ; and these observations may therefore appear uncalled for, if not intrusive ; but as some of them relate to difficulties and doubts, which I have myself experienced in the discharge of my duty, and of which no person who has not practically experienced them, can form a correct idea, I trust I may be pardoned for claiming so much of your valuable time, and that the remarks I have ventured to make may not be deemed altogether unworthy of consideration.

I have the honour to remain,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

ROBERT FAIR.

103, *Jermyn Street*, June 1838.

THE END.

3

SECOND LETTER
TO
THE FREEHOLDERS
OF
THE COUNTY OF YORK,
ON NEGRO SLAVERY:
BEING
AN INQUIRY INTO THE CLAIMS OF THE
WEST INDIANS
FOR
EQUITABLE COMPENSATION.

BY THE
RIGHT HON. R. WILMOT HORTON.

It is by no means intended to attribute the existence and continuance of this most opprobrious system to our Colonists exclusively. On the contrary, the guilt and shame arising from it belong in perhaps an equal degree to the People and Parliament of this country.

The Colonists say that they shall sustain a great actual loss by this proposed change of system. If so, they will of course have an opportunity of preferring and establishing their claim to Indemnity.—REPORT OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, April 1823.

LONDON :
EDMUND LLOYD, HARLEY STREET.
1830.

✓ .
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LETTERS, &c.

LETTER II.

GENTLEMEN,

MY first Letter to you has, I trust, convinced you, that not only the House of Commons, which sanctioned unanimously the Resolutions of 1823, but the Abolitionists of 1823, intended that the West Indians should receive equitable compensation for positive injury accruing to their property, as the result of any measures growing out of those Resolutions. The parties who framed the Resolutions of 1823, adopted by Parliament, never intended that mere measures of melioration and improved system should be a subject for compensation. It is even unnecessary to argue that point with the West Indians themselves; because, in the solemn inquiry before the Privy Council in 1827, it was admitted by the eminent counsel who were engaged on the side of the West India interest, that, with the exception of the compulsory manumission clauses, which they considered as involving a loss of property without adequate

compensation, *they had no objections to offer*, or claims for indemnity to prefer.

I now approach the question, Why is compensation for the loss of labour of the Slave abstractedly just? I answer, simply, because this country has directly and indirectly fostered the existence of Slavery in the West Indies, and given an encouragement and guarantee to investments in that species of property, (however objectionable in itself,) by throwing over it, as over other property, the shield of the law. If, therefore, the State deprive the Planter of that labour, which he can alone obtain through the medium of coercion, that encouragement and guarantee demand from the State equitable compensation for his loss.

But it has been argued, that all such considerations are superseded by the fact, that Slavery is repugnant to Christianity; that we ought not, under any circumstances, to violate the precepts of Christianity; and that, therefore, we are bound to destroy Slavery at once, without consideration of consequences.

If equitable compensation were in itself *impossible*, the plea of the repugnance of Slavery to Christianity might, with parties maintaining that doctrine, justify its summary and uncompensated abolition. But as, on the contrary, compensation is clearly possible, such a plea is utterly without avail. A man may borrow a thousand pounds upon an annuity interest, and the lender may omit

to take any legal security. With what semblance of justice can the borrower say, "My mind is entirely made up, that lending money at so much per cent. is usury, and that usury is repugnant to Christianity; therefore I shall not pay you this annuity, as it is contrary to my conscience to do so?" The course which such a borrower ought to take is quite clear—to fulfil his engagement, and to borrow no more. The course which the Legislature ought to take, if it be convinced that Slavery is repugnant to Christianity, is, to give equitable compensation to the Proprietors of Slaves, and to enslave no longer.

But here the question arises—why is compensation *necessary*? It has often been asserted that it is altogether unnecessary, free-labour being far more profitable than slave-labour, and there being no reason to doubt that the Slaves, made free, would work, as English labourers do, for wages; and who, it is asked, would be insane enough to contend, that, in England, the employers of labour would be benefited if a state of Slavery were introduced in supersession of the present system? The Abolitionists generally, and the Anti-Slavery Society especially, have maintained these doctrines. In the year 1823, the Anti-Slavery Society published a pamphlet, containing the "Substance of the Debate in the House of Commons on the 15th of May, 1823," on which day the House

unanimously adopted Mr. Canning's resolutions. In an Appendix to this publication (A. A. p. 233,) is the following passage: "Would the West India Proprietors be worse off, or would the public interest suffer, if labourers in the West Indies worked, as labourers in England work, from a view, not to the benefit of their employers, but to the benefit of themselves? *A free black population would unquestionably act on the same principle, and with the same ends in view, as a free white population.*"

Again, in a publication entitled "A Brief View of the Nature and Effects of Negro Slavery, as it exists in the British Colonies," published in 1823, they say,— "In the present advanced state of knowledge, it can no longer be a question, *that the labour of Slaves is much less profitable than that of Freemen,* and that it can only be supported by a very heavy expense to the community at large."

Anglus also, to whose controversial writings reference has been made in my first letter, says,— "Does the Quarterly Reviewer FEAR that labourers could not be hired to assist in manufacturing sugar, if adequate wages were offered? He will find it hard, by the utmost exertion of his metaphysical skill, to convince *reasoning men* in this country, that, if the Negro will work industriously from moral motives, on

“ a Sunday or Saturday, he will not also be influenced by similar motives, to work industriously on the other five days in the week.”

The vital question, therefore, as far as compensation is involved, is this:—Who are right? *those* Abolitionists, who contend that sugar can be grown and manufactured in the West Indies by manumitted Slaves, that is, by free labourers, giving a fair profit to the planter,—or *those* West Indians who contend that manumitted Slaves cannot be induced by any temptation of wages which the Planter would be able to give, to execute that particular sort of continuous settled labour, which must be applied to the preparation of sugar, if a commodity fit for the market is ultimately to be produced?

I am without an argument to offer you, resting upon experience, in favor of the former opinion; and I shall show you, in a subsequent part of this letter, that my being without such an argument is not my fault, but exclusively the fault of the Abolitionists. As a specimen of the opinion of the West Indians, I propose here to cite the answers given by Major Moody, (whose experience and science entitle his opinions to the utmost attention,) when that gentleman was examined before the Privy Council, on the Appeal of the Berbice Planters against the Law of Compulsory Manumission. I do not place these answers before you, for the purpose of inviting your assent to the doctrines maintained in them, (because that assent

should be withheld till arguments in support of the contrary doctrines are before you,) but as affording you the best means of making you practically acquainted with the subject. Major Moody is asked :—

Your attention has been very much directed to the subject of free-labour?—Being employed by Government in a particular duty, in consequence of an unfortunate difference between my colleague and myself, it was directed to it more especially.

In more Colonies than one?—I have been in every Colony in the West Indies, except Jamaica. I have never been there. The observations made were only those of a person looking to the value of the Colonies to the parent state.

Do you think that the African, in his present state, would be likely to work in the field for wages?—Not such wages as the Colonist could afford to give him.

Do you think any system of Vagrant Laws would induce him to work on a sugar plantation?—It becomes very difficult to say what will be the effect of a thing which has not been tried in the English Colonies. It did not answer in those of France.

From your personal experience, do you think any system of Vagrant Laws would induce a free Negro to work on a sugar plantation?—It is very difficult to determine what is impossible; but if a system of Vagrant Laws produced that adequate degree of *necessity* which the free Negro in Berbice has not now, it might do it; but the formation of a most coercive police for that purpose would be required, and be almost equal to an army. I cannot say what the effect would be. It would depend on the effect

of the police, which in Haiti has not been found to enable their Capitalists to compete with other nations less favourably situated as to soil for raising sugar.

The mere circumstance of his being obliged to pay rent for land would not, in your opinion, induce him to undertake steady labour on a sugar plantation?—If there was a great density of population, and he could get subsistence in no other way but from the land, I should suppose he would do it; but if the question is asked me with reference to Berbice, I would say, decidedly not; because there is not that proportion there between the population and the means of subsistence, which would have the effect of necessity on the free Negro, to make them work as many days of the week for hire, as would enable the Capitalists profitably to raise sugar.

If by working for two days in the week, he could get subsistence for the whole week, do you think he would work the other four days?—No, certainly.

You mean, in his present state of civilization?—Yes; that is to say, he will only work relatively to his wants. I understand the question as stating that his wants would all be supplied by two days labour. He will work to the extent of supplying these wants, which being all relative, consequently, beyond that, he will not be under the stimulus of any necessity: at least I have never seen them do it, and I have seen them in different states of civilization in the West Indies. I have seen free Negroes accustomed to agriculture, to whom property was left, and whose mode of living was not beyond that of Slave persons around them; whereas I have seen Slave persons on the estate of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, where they were much superior in comfort and intelligence to the same class of people who had been manumitted, and had land and money given to them to

make them comfortable; others who had land but no money; yet in comforts, intelligence, and industry, these free Negroes were inferior to the Slaves on the estate of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

When you speak of a system of Police, you mean something very like compulsion?—Decided compulsion.

You have seen the Haitian code perhaps? Yes, I have. Do you mean compulsion similar to that you find in the Haitian code? I do not think the Haitian code would induce the English Negro to work for such wages as the Capitalist can afford to give in a kind of cultivation like that of sugar; and I have the greatest doubts of its making the free people of Haiti work for wages, and enable the Capitalist to produce sugar for sale in another country, upon equal terms with that raised by Slave-labour.

It would be a compulsion more severe than that you find in the Haitian code?—Yes, most assuredly, so as to obtain steady but moderate labour for the working days of the year, in making the soil productive, as well as the capital sunk thereon.

In Berbice or Demerara, can you state whether half a day's labour gives a Negro subsistence for the week?—I can state that the food of these persons will consist principally of plantains. On good land, a man will cultivate about six acres; and that, when it is planted, will give food to the amount (as I am enabled to say by the result of my calculations) of about thirty thousand pounds weight of plantains. It is altogether impossible for one human stomach to consume the quantity of food he could raise.

How much labour a-week must he give to that?—It supposes him to work throughout the whole year. The labour to obtain his mere food comes to a very small sum

of exertion; but in other cases, where the land has been in long cultivation of plantains, the land produces less. I should say, if he worked one day in the week, he would have all kinds of subsistence, which his habits at present, and the habits of similar persons around him, are likely to require. Two days, perhaps, will be better, as affording a full allowance of time. I should beg to explain, that in doubling it, I do not conceive the Capitalist can thereby more profitably carry on his plantation cultivation by free labour, for it must be made productive by six days labour in the week, if the Capitalist is to enter into competition with other countries in the production of the same article. With the Berbice planter, it is impossible that he can get his capital made productive with only two days labour in the week, when he has afterwards to take the article produced into competition in the market with the Capitalist of another place, who can raise the same article, and for the same expense of subsistence to his labourers as wages, yet making his capital productive for five days in the week, the time during the year that the capital of the Berbice planter would be idle and unemployed, would ruin him.

In his cross-examination by Mr. Serjeant Bosanquet, who was retained on the side of the Slaves, Major Moody was asked,—

I think you say that you do not think that emancipated Slaves would work on a sugar plantation for such wages as the Capitalists could afford to give?—Yes, that is my opinion.

But supposing larger wages were given, do you not think that such wages would operate as an inducement to

them to work on such plantation?—In the supposition that the planter will give larger wages than he can afford, I cannot say what would be the result; for it is a thing never likely to happen, and which no man, I think, could have foreseen.

If the sugar planter received, by way of compensation, a sum of money sufficient to enable him to pay these extra wages, having the same profit that he had before, do you not then think that the emancipated Negroes might be induced to work on the plantation?—No, not steadily, affording such labour on sugar cultivation as the Capitalists would require; because the sugar cultivation may be represented as a garden cultivation. The coffee may be represented as an orchard cultivation; but in the business of a sugar cultivation, there is a constant demand for labour, though less of course at one time than another. At the time when much exertion is required, such as planting when the seasons are favourable, and taking off the crop when the seasons are unfavourable, then comes the period when you absolutely require and must have a certain degree of exertion, which amounts perhaps to the same exertion that is given in the harvest in England, at a time when it is difficult to save the harvest. It is at that time that the free person in sugar cultivation cannot with certainty be induced to work for the Capitalist, from the low relative wants which he and those around him have; and those wants now are, and are likely to be for many years so low, as to be gratified by the means of his own exertions free from controul during two days in the week. What, then, is to tempt him to give that steady industry which the sugar-planter absolutely requires to carry on his business?—The case supposes wages will induce the free Negro to do this: but the case supposes that which has never yet been seen in the low lands of the Torrid Zone, where the

state of population is low with relation to the capital which could employ the population, and the extent of fertile land enables an individual to support himself in the easiest manner, without depending on the Capitalist for wages. I believe, from the first settlement of America till the present day, no case can be found such as is supposed; and therefore, when no case can be found, and with all the pains and care with which I have investigated the subject, I am obliged to come to a conclusion which is contrary to my wishes: I am led to the conclusion, that the free Negroes will not work so steadily as the Sugar Capitalist would require on his estate.

Do you happen to know whether, in the Island of Java, Batavia for instance, which is in the same degree of south latitude as Demerara is in the north, free persons are employed on sugar plantations?—Yes; but I do not know, nor has it ever been fairly stated, what are the relative wants of the working population, or the ratio of wealth to employ that population, as compared with that of Demerara, nor what are the effects of the institution of *caste*, or of local Government, or of any other power of coercion, producing the obligation to labour there for wages; and above all, we have no fair statement of what is the rate of profit to the Capitalist, or what capital is invested in sugar cultivation under certain alleged circumstances.

Supposing the Colony, instead of being contiguous to a large quantity of uncultivated land, was an island, of which all the land was already occupied, do you think that, in such a case, there would be a probability and hope of free Negroes working on a sugar plantation?—Certainly they would, if you take into consideration that this supposes that the population is to be so dense, and the capital to be in that ratio with the population, that the Slave, or the

Negro now free, cannot subsist, but by the labour that he is to give to the Capitalist under the pressure of necessity, as in England, and for the wages that he gets, the Capitalist can afford to employ him, and yet get a profit on stock. When such a case arises from density of population, &c., the Negroes' instruction, and a variety of circumstances (and in the case of an island, as is put, from whence they cannot escape, from the pressure of necessity), I can conceive of no difficulty in the cultivation of sugar by Free-labour.

You will at once perceive, Gentlemen, what a variety of elements enter into the consideration of this question of Free-labour. Among the most palpable are, the character and habits of the Slave, the precise extent of his wants, and how far, if satisfied, he would prefer a state of indolence in the sunny regions which he inhabits, to a state of activity, although rewarded by pecuniary gain; the nature and character of sugar cultivation and manufacture in all its details; the differing circumstances of two countries, the one having a cold climate with a dense labouring population, compelled to undergo labour for the purpose of obtaining food, clothing, and lodging; the other having a warm climate, and a very small labouring population, who, if not compelled to labour by coercion, would not be required to undergo it for the purpose of satisfying those wants—food being either spontaneously produced, or acquired with slight labour, and a genial cli-

mate only requiring clothing and lodging of the most simple kind.*

“ The naked Negro, panting at the Line,
 “ Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine,
 “ Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
 “ And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.”

Without dwelling further on these points, let me ask you, whether your own judgment does not at once, and as it were intuitively, point out to you,

* I have just received a copy of the papers ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on the 16th of July last. I there find, in a circular dispatch of Sir George Murray, the following passage: “ The nature of the climate in which the
 “ labour of the Slave is to be performed, the constitutional
 “ indisposition to continuous exertion, which so peculiarly characterizes the Negro race, and the difficulty which all men
 “ experience in the steady performance of any labour without
 “ the stimulus of wages, must concur to endanger the health of
 “ a Plantation Slave, when subjected to improper exertions.” In my first letter, I quoted a very valuable opinion of Major Moody, on the impolicy of exposing a Plantation Slave to improper exertions. I fully admit “ the constitutional indisposition” of the Negro “ to continuous exertion ;” but I absolutely deny the important inference which appears to be involved in the following phrase: “ the difficulty which all men
 “ experience in the steady performance of any labour without the
 “ stimulus of wages.” These expressions seem to imply, that the stimulus of wages would facilitate the steady performance of Plantation-labour by the Negro, when made free. From this opinion I utterly dissent.

that an "axiom" which may be true in our own country, "that the desire of bettering their condition will always prompt the lower classes "to labour for reasonable wages," is not NECESSARILY true in countries lying between the Tropics?

Even in our own country, there is a perpetual conflict between the disposition to enjoy and the disposition to economize; and employers are obliged to offer high wages, to allure labourers to the execution of duties which are in themselves irksome and painful. In this country, property is bought and sold subject to such incidents; but in the West Indies, it is bought and sold upon the faith of the proprietor being able to command labour by coercion. If the nation decide that the power to *command* labour ought no longer to exist, let it cease; but let equitable compensation be given to those who, if they lose that power, at the same time lose the greater part of the value of their property.

If, indeed, it could be shewn, that Free-labour would be as profitable to proprietors in the West Indies as Slave-labour, compensation would cease to affect the question of the abolition of Slavery. If it be not true, this great act of national benevolence, this tardy and imperfect expiation (if expiation it can be called) of the injustice of centuries, ought to be accompanied with indemnity from this guilty nation collectively, to those par-

particular individuals whose property depends upon Slave-labour. In accordance with the adage,

“ Vilius argentum est auro, virtutibus aurum,

“ Virtus post nummos.”

The money must precede the virtue, or at least accompany it.

From the earliest period of my examining this subject, I was aware that *the real difficulty* turned upon this point of Free-labour. You will therefore not be surprised at my having written, in January, 1824, to the late lamented Mr. Huskisson, suggesting that the question of Free-labour should be referred to a Committee. I told him, that I wished the exclusive attention of a Committee to be given to what appeared to me to be *the only question* deserving the consideration of statesmen, in the investigation of the whole subject, namely, whether Slave-labour could be transmuted into Free-labour, without giving the Proprietor an equitable claim for pecuniary compensation, in consequence of the *forced* introduction of such a change. I stated my conviction, that, if the subject were not completely analysed *in this direct point of view*, it might be very easy to stave it over from year to year, without any real progress being made, or without the fair purpose of any of the Resolutions of 1823 being satisfied. I called the attention of Mr. Huskisson to the fact, that, if it

should turn out that pecuniary injury *was inseparable* from this transmutation of Slave into Free-labour, it was necessary to decide, in what degree and in what manner compensation was to be given; and I added, that, unless the Government would consider this question, I thought they would not ultimately be able to escape from the difficulties which such a temporizing system would bring upon them. I stated in that Letter, what I have so often expressed in speeches and in writings, *and to the accuracy of which Anglus entirely consented*, that the resistance of the Colonists was not founded on any love for Slavery, but on their apprehensions of consequences, which they considered to be calculated progressively to diminish the value of their property, without any principle of compensation having been established. I *then* supposed (what turns out *not* to be the fact,) that the Abolitionists would, on their part, be prepared to say,—“ Show that injury will accrue to “ property, and we shall not object to compensa- “ tion.” I supposed that the Colonists, on their part, would be prepared to say,—“ Show that “ these projected measures involve no danger to “ our pecuniary interests, and then we can have “ no hesitation to adopt them.”

His Majesty's Government did not think it expedient to appoint a Committee: but, six weeks after my having written this letter, Mr. Canning detailed to Parliament the meliorating measures

which the Government had decided to adopt in the ceded Colonies, and to recommend to the Colonies having legislatures. The only measure then detailed which related to the emancipation of the Slaves, was that which is popularly known under the term "Compulsory Manumission."

This Law of Compulsory Manumission, which I shall explain hereafter, was protested against by the Colonists of Demerara and Berbice, in the strongest manner, in the year 1827, on the ground that it was incompatible with "the equitable consideration of the interests of private property." His Majesty's Government decided that this question should be summarily argued before the Privy Council, for the purpose of both parties bringing forward every sort of evidence that could bear on the subject. Mr. Serjeant Bosanquet, now one of His Majesty's Judges, and Mr. Denman, now Attorney General, were selected on what might be considered as the side of the Slaves. They were nominally counsel for the agent for Berbice, but practically for the Law in question, which had been enacted by the King in Council for the benefit of the Slaves,

On the side of the Appellants were ranged Mr. Adam, Mr. Carr, and Mr. Hibbert.

If reference be made to page 95. of the folio Report of those Proceedings, it will be seen that I made the following observation: "May I be allowed to say a word with respect to

“ the course of proceeding? The documentary
 “ evidence brought forward by Mr. Hibbert, one
 “ of the counsel for the West Indians, has gone
 “ very materially into the subject of Free-
 “ labour, which is not directly before us.” *Mr.*
Adam: “ It was introduced by cross-examination
 “ on the other side, or we should not have entered
 “ upon it.” *Mr. Wilmot Heron*: “ Certainly it
 “ was; I only wished to draw Mr. Serjeant Bo-
 “ sanquet’s attention to this point, that it would
 “ be most desirable to obtain documentary evi-
 “ dence, if it be to be obtained, to meet that which
 “ has been brought forward by Mr. Hibbert. I
 “ do not limit my observation to documentary,
 “ but refer also to oral evidence, in contradiction
 “ to the opinions laid down by Mr. Hibbert. I
 “ find that, in the Reports of the Anti-Slavery
 “ Society, a Society well known in this country,
 “ principles are laid down, *directly in contradic-*
 “ *tion to every word asserted by Mr. Hibbert.* I
 “ find it stated by a gentleman, who, I believe,
 “ is one of the members of that Society, in a
 “ publication dated 1823, that if Slave-labour
 “ were cheaper than Free-labour, we might confi-
 “ dently presume that estates would be rendered
 “ less productive by the emancipation of the Slaves
 “ who cultivated them, but that that presumption
 “ is contradicted by experience. I find another
 “ passage, in which a gentleman, I believe also
 “ a member of that Committee, says, that he

“ might enlarge much upon the loss which the
 “ West Indian Colonists have sustained in various
 “ ways, by pertinaciously adhering to the wretch-
 “ ed system of cultivating their estates by forced
 “ labourers : I find also, in another Report of that
 “ Society, very strong observations on the argu-
 “ ment which, it is stated, had been insisted upon
 “ by the West Indians, that but little is to be ex-
 “ pected from the voluntary labour of emancipated
 “ Slaves. I would take the opportunity of men-
 “ tioning thus publicly to the Court, *how desirable*
 “ *it is to obtain evidence, if possible, to show the*
 “ *grounds upon which those opinions have been*
 “ *held, and to explain the reasons why they have*
 “ *been so strongly stated.*”* Lord Bexley : “ I am
 “ sure Mr. Serjeant Bosanquet will do his duty to
 “ the cause he supports, and will bring forward
 “ *all the evidence* he has it in his power to pre-
 “ sent.” Mr. Serjeant Bosanquet : “ I will bring
 “ before your Lordships any evidence with which I
 “ am furnished. I know of no evidence except
 “ that furnished to me ; I cannot pretend to look

* I might have added, that Anglus, so often referred to as a
 distinguished writer on the side of the Abolitionists, had led
 the public to suppose that the Abolitionists were most anxious
 for a fair and temperate inquiry into this vital subject ; for, in
 his Second Letter, he says ; “ The Reviewer says he is anxious
 for a fair and temperate inquiry into this subject—*so I can*
assure him are the Abolitionists.

“ out for evidence. I can only bring the evidence
 “ before your Lordships, that I may be furnished
 “ with by those from whom I receive my instruc-
 “ tions.” *Mr. Wilmot Horton*: “ I make these
 “ observations with a view to *induce persons who*
 “ *may entertain those opinions on Free-labour, to come*
 “ forward to support them.” *Mr. Serjeant Bo-*
sanquet: “ *I so understood your Lordships.*” *Mr.*
Maule, Solicitor to the Treasury: “ Notice has
 “ been given. I have been ready since the last
 “ meeting of the Council to receive any proffers
 “ of evidence, *but I have not received any.*”—
 This took place in the Privy Council on Friday
 the 30th of November, 1827. On the 23d of the
 same month, I had myself addressed a letter, by
 the direction of the Privy Council, in the follow-
 ing words, to Mr. Buxton; and to the latter part
 of that letter Mr. Maule alluded, when he said
 that he had in vain waited for evidence.

“ *Downing Street, Nov. 23, 1827.*

“ Sir,

“ I received the directions of Mr. Secre-
 “ tary Huskisson, to apprise you of the period at
 “ which the resumption of the case of the Berbice
 “ Appellants would take place before the Privy
 “ Council. That communication was made to you
 “ in consequence of your having been the mover of
 “ the Resolution on the subject of Slavery, for which
 “ the Resolutions proposed as an amendment by

“ the late Mr. Canning were substituted, with the
 “ unanimous consent of the House of Commons.

“ I am now authorized by their Lordships, to in-
 “ close to you an extract of the original minute
 “ of the Privy Council, of the date of the 7th in-
 “ stant, on the subject of this Appeal, as well as
 “ of the communication made by Lord Bexley, the
 “ President of the Committee, by direction of their
 “ Lordships, to the Counsel, both for the Appel-
 “ lants and Respondents, on the 21st instant, by
 “ which you will perceive that the inquiry is made
 “ as general as possible, with respect to the ope-
 “ ration of the Compulsory Manumission Clauses,
 “ —whether as they exist in the Trinidad Order
 “ in Council, or accompanied with those modifica-
 “ tions which are referred to in Lord Bathurst’s
 “ despatch to Sir Benjamin D’Urban, of the 25th
 “ of February, 1826, as proposed to be applied to
 “ Demerara,—or as they are actually found in the
 “ local ordinance of the Governor and Council of
 “ Berbice, which has not yet received the sanction
 “ of His Majesty’s Government.”

“ I am further authorized by their Lordships, to
 “ communicate to you, in the same spirit in which
 “ my former communication was made, that every
 “ facility will be afforded to you, or those who act
 “ with you, to whom Mr. Canning, in February,
 “ 1824, communicated the decision of the Govern-
 “ ment, to pass an Order in Council for all the
 “ Crown Colonies, giving to the Slave the power of

“ purchasing his freedom by appraisement, if you
 “ and they consider it desirable, for the entire elu-
 “ cidation of the subject involved in the pending
 “ inquiry, that any particular testimony should be
 “ produced, or official documents laid before the
 “ Committee. If you can make any suggestions,
 “ or recommend any evidence to be examined,
 “ Mr. Serjeant Bosanquet and Mr. Denman have
 “ been directed, by the Privy Council, to afford
 “ every possible assistance in giving effect to such
 “ suggestions, or in placing such evidence on re-
 “ cord in the most satisfactory manner. If, there-
 “ fore, you should wish to avail yourself of those
 “ facilities, Mr. Maule, the Solicitor of the Trea-
 “ sury, is prepared to give every assistance for the
 “ purpose, and you are requested to signify your
 “ wishes to him as soon as possible.

“ I have the honour, &c. &c.

(Signed) “ R. W. HORTON.”

“ T. F. Burton, Esq., M.P.”

But so important did I consider it, in every
 point of view, that this solemn occasion *should not*
be thrown away, for putting on record those princi-
 ples and facts with which the Anti-Slavery Society
 had deluged the country, for the purpose of show-
 ing how unreasonable the West Indians were, in
 objecting to the substitution of Free-labour for
 Slave-labour, that I informed Mr. Macaulay, that,
 on the principle of doing as I would be done by,

I should be perfectly willing, though a Privy-counsellor, to be placed in the box before the Privy Council, as an evidence to maintain the affirmative of what I had said, and to be cross-examined as much as any one pleased, provided that he would consent to be placed there, to maintain the affirmative of his own propositions.

Mr. Macaulay *did not choose* to accept this proposition. I do not mean to imply that he was not perfectly justified in refusing; but I must express my astonishment that he *did not rejoice* in such an opportunity, of coming forward to put on record his opinions in favour of Free-labour on so solemn an occasion. He must have known then, as he must know at the present moment, that, whatever may be the excitement of public feeling at any particular period, the question *will and must* rest upon the issue of such an inquiry. I venture to predict, that the people of England will not only perceive but admit, that if the Slaves are to be emancipated in *those Colonies* where the recommendations of the Government, founded upon the Resolutions of 1823, ARE ACTUALLY THE LAW OF THE LAND, compensation in money must be granted, and from their pockets, unless it *can be shown* that the probable substitution of Free-labour for Slave-labour makes compensation *unnecessary*.

To continue however my narrative,—I was so anxious to have the subject fairly and fully investi-

gated, that, in a letter which I addressed to Mr. Denman, on the 4th of December, 1827, I said, “ If you can induce any gentleman with whom you “ may be acquainted, to put his opinions on record “ on the question of market-price,” (which involved the question of Free and Slave-labour,) “ so that “ they may form part of the examination on oath “ before the Privy Council, you will confer a personal favor on me. I am told that it is intended “ to reserve the opinion expressed in the 27th Anti-Slavery Reporter on this question for the House “ of Commons ; but, as the Order in Council which “ the King will be advised to frame, must have reference to the evidence produced on oath *during* “ *this inquiry*, and not to evidence that may be “ found in pamphlets or publications scattered over “ the world, if evidence (or in other words opinion) is now purposely withholden, for the sake “ of being brought forward in the House of Commons, against that law which is to be founded “ on this inquiry, I shall protest in the strongest “ manner against the omission to take the present “ opportunity of putting those opinions on solemn “ record, not in the pages of the Anti-Slavery Reporter, but in the evidence upon oath taken before the Privy Council, where they may have “ their full weight ; be that weight in reality more “ or less, on those who are sworn to advise the “ Crown justly on this subject. My object in ad-

“ dressing this long letter to you is, to put on record that I have not been sparing in trouble to have this case fully investigated.”

What may have been the reasons which induced the Abolitionists to resist this appeal to their candor, (I might almost say to their honor,) to come forward and put their opinions on record, *I do not presume to say*. I have shown that they had expressed their anxiety to have a temperate inquiry.—I certainly have heard that they protested against the tribunal. If that were true, such a protest was not less frivolous than unjust. Observe what was offered to them. Mr. Denman, a man of first rate talent, himself a Parliamentary Abolitionist, was the counsel, practically speaking, for the Slaves. Mr. Serjeant Bosanquet, though, as far as I am aware, not previously pledged as Mr. Denman on the question, was also there, to afford his eminent talents in support of the *case of the Slave*. What then had they to fear from the construction of the Court? If that Court had entertained the most violent West Indian feelings, they could not have suffered in the slightest degree. The evidence was to be printed and circulated. What more could they wish? They would have been examined in chief by the counsel for the Slaves;—they would have been cross-examined by the counsel for the Appellants, and would have been examined by the Court. The ultimate decision of the King’s Government was not more

likely to be in favor of the Slave in consequence of the *absence* of their opinions. Did they shrink from sustaining a cross-examination before that Court? Impossible! Such an examination would have been put on record, and the public and the country would have decided whether it were in good faith, and suited to the solemnity of the occasion. I have often endeavored in vain to elicit from them a true explanation of the reason for their refusal. I now invite you to avail yourselves of your paramount influence with their leaders, and to inquire, *why* they would not put those opinions on record, in favor of the practicability of Free-labour? To suppose that they would have so often and so absolutely asserted the fact, did not they possess *ample means* of supporting their assertion, would be to impeach their honor and integrity

I trust that a Select Committee will be appointed in the House of Commons, for the special purpose of setting this question at rest. I am at a loss to imagine why such a Committee should be a better tribunal than the Privy Council, to receive the statements of the Abolitionists in favor of Free-labour; but if they so consider it, and come forward with as much zeal in support of their opinions, as they evinced unwillingness to do so in 1827, the inquiry will not yet be too late. If that opportunity should be offered, I would call upon them, by every appeal to their sense of jus-

tice, honor, and religion, to support, by arguments and evidence, those assertions which they have again and again made in their authorized publications. I admit, that I shall be severely disappointed, if you do not echo that call. I implore you to place yourselves in the character of Jurors, and not of political adherents, when you ask yourselves, whether you ought to support such an appeal. You must in fairness admit, that, in the year 1827, I invited and intreated them to appear before the Privy Council; and that, when invitation and entreaty failed, I even challenged them to maintain their opinions. Yet every resource was in vain, and they preserved a solemn and unyielding silence. Were I to repeat the challenge directly to them, it would be utterly without avail; but were even a single hint to drop from you, as a body, that you thought my appeal in itself just, their compliance would be certain, and the investigation of that vital part of the subject would clear away the real difficulties which exist in carrying into effect the Resolutions of 1823.

I think I may, with some confidence, challenge the Abolitionists to shew, that they ever took more pains to search for proof that Slaves made free would execute all necessary purposes of labour, than I did, when, in 1824, I requested the Society of Arts to offer their gold medal, or a premium of fifty guineas, to the person who should present to

the Society a satisfactory account, founded on experience of the most advantageous mode of diminishing the labour of Slaves employed in the cultivation of sugar, cotton, and coffee, by the substitution of agricultural machinery or by the use of cattle. That premium has been offered every successive year; yet not one Abolitionist has ever come forward, to shew in what manner this desirable change might be accomplished. Can any man doubt, that the emancipation of Slaves would be materially facilitated, if it could be shewn that, by a new application of machinery and of cattle, fifty Negroes made free, could, with a less degree of personal exertion, produce a result equal to that of the labour of a hundred Slaves working on the present system? I will venture to assert that such a discovery would have done more towards the bringing into early effect a satisfactory principle of emancipation, than all the speeches which the Abolitionists have made in and out of Parliament since the period of 1823.

After all, it is possible that I may be fighting against a shadow, and that, when the subject is brought forward in Parliament, it will be attended with as clear a proposition of compensation as is contained in the following passage, extracted from the Report of the Anti-Slavery Society in 1825:—
 “ They [the friends of the African race] will be ready, the Committee doubt not, if necessary, to do still more, and even to make large

“ pecuniary sacrifices to accomplish their great
 “ object. Indeed, if we look narrowly into the
 “ question of compensation, we shall find it far
 “ from being attended with all those formidable
 “ and apparently insuperable difficulties, with
 “ which the exaggerated claims of the West In-
 “ dians have invested it. Mr. Barham, however,
 “ who is not likely to undervalue those claims,
 “ and who, in some points, exceedingly over-rates
 “ them, estimates the annual net income derived
 “ by West Indian Proprietors from their property
 “ in the West Indies, at 2,100,000*l.* If we sup-
 “ pose this estimate not to be excessive, and value
 “ it at sixteen years’ purchase, which, in a coun-
 “ try where interest is at six per cent., and pro-
 “ perty exposed to much comparative hazard, is a
 “ high valuation, it would amount to 33,600,000*l.*
 “ At 3½ per cent., this sum would be completely
 “ liquidated by a perpetual annuity of 1,176,000*l.*,
 “ a sum less than what the nation is now made to
 “ pay to the West Indians, in consequence of the
 “ mode of regulating the drawback on sugar,
 “ independently of the protecting duties, and ex-
 “ clusive of all other charges, whether civil or
 “ military. What we now pay, however, we pay
 “ to uphold and aggravate Slavery. A less sum,
 “ if Mr. Barham be right in his estimate of the
 “ annual income of the Colonies, would be suffi-
 “ cient to buy out the whole system ; and even if
 “ that were thought too large a step to take at

“ once, yet by the appropriation of less than a
 “ third of what we now pay, we might redeem from
 “ their bondage the whole of the female popula-
 “ tion, and thus extinguish Slavery in a single
 “ generation.”

Having endeavoured to show the extreme importance of the question as to the probability of Free-labour being forthcoming as a substitution for Slave-labour, I hope that you will be more competent to follow me through my explanation of the Law of Compulsory Manumission. That Law in its amended form, is contained in the Clauses lvii. to lxviii. of the Order in Council of February, 1830, pages 95 to 105 of the Appendix to my First Letter.

The phrase, “ compulsory manumission,” means the right of the Slave to be manumitted upon payment of an appraisement price, to be awarded by two arbitrators, and an umpire if necessary. The Master is, by the law of compulsory manumission, compelled to accept that price. Now, if the price be such as enables the Master to purchase a Slave equally gifted with the manumitted Slave, it is clear that he does not suffer any injury, beyond that which is inseparable from a commutation which, even though founded on an equitable principle, involves a forced change of property. The difficulty therefore turns upon the fact, whether he will be able, with that money price, to replace the labour of his Slave; so that the power of his estate

to produce may not be prejudiced by the change. If he can *bonâ fide* replace the labour of his Slave, in the full sense of that term, it is quite clear that he is *not* entitled to further compensation on that particular point. If he cannot, undoubtedly his claim to compensation is unsatisfied, according to the spirit of the Resolutions of 1823. Whether he can or not must be determined by experience. It was with reference, therefore, to that decision which experience must ultimately afford with respect to this measure of compulsory manumission, that I suggested my seventh Resolution on the 13th of July last: “That this House fully
 “ appreciates the degree of caution with which it
 “ is necessary to legislate in all matters affecting
 “ the interests of property, to the conservation of
 “ which this House is pledged; and that it will
 “ direct its unceasing attention to the course and
 “ effect of this change of legislation in the ceded
 “ Colonies, for the purpose of satisfying, in the
 “ fullest sense, the distinct and difficult pledges of
 “ Parliament above cited from the Resolutions of
 “ 1823, which Resolutions equally contemplated
 “ the interests of the Master and the well-being
 “ of the Slave.” Those who are prepared to enter into a critical examination of this subject should study the evidence taken before the Privy Council in November, 1827, on the case of the Berbice Appeal, the proceedings of the Court, and the speeches of the eminent counsel who were em-

ployed upon that occasion. But to understand the subject adequately for the purpose of the present inquiry, the foregoing explanation will, I trust, be sufficient.

Compulsory manumission was introduced by Mr. Canning into his scheme of meliorating measures, in consequence of his finding it as the law of the land in the Spanish Colony of Trinidad. He professed his object to be, to collect together all the best laws that existed with respect to Slaves, wherever he might find them, in any part of our Colonial possessions. Finding that law in force in Trinidad, he (or I should rather say, his Majesty's Government,) introduced it, as the only measure which tended practically to promote that pledge of the Resolutions of 1823, which ultimately contemplated for the Slave "a participation in the civil rights and privileges of British subjects." This measure of compulsory manumission was introduced with the entire consent of the leading Parliamentary Abolitionists, if not at their direct and special suggestion.

In my speech of the 6th of March, 1828,* I have endeavoured to shew the difference of circumstances between self-manumission permitted in Trinidad, under the continued import of new Slaves, and self-manumission permitted under the incident of a total cessation of all import, even

* Vide Appendix.

from other British Colonies. I have shewn, in that speech, that the working of this self-manumission law, if it lead to the extinction of Slavery, can effect that object only by successively transferring Slaves from the cultivation of sugar, to other occupations in which they can be more easily replaced by Free-labour. That result is so inevitable, that it can hardly fail to strike the mind of any man who attends to this subject even for the first time. Let it be supposed that, upon a sugar estate, a Slave has obtained (no matter from what source,) money enough to purchase his freedom. The price is assessed by appraisers, and he obtains his freedom. His Master proceeds to purchase a new Slave, with the money-price which he has just received. To whom does he apply?—to another sugar Proprietor?—Certainly not. The labour of each Slave on a sugar Estate is of more value than it is on a cocoa or cotton plantation; inasmuch as, in the former case, it is combined with a greater amount of fixed capital, and consequently produces a more profitable result than in the latter, in which such combination does not exist. The cotton Proprietor will be tempted to sell his Slave at a MUCH LOWER price than the sugar Proprietor can do; because, having little or no fixed capital, his produce from the labour of his Slave, and therefore his value *to him* as a means of production, bears no adequate proportion to the produce

arising from the labour of the Slave employed on the sugar estate. If, therefore, compulsory manumission, whether assisted by donations or not, is to present the means whereby the Slave population is ultimately to become free, it follows, as an inevitable consequence, that free-labour will be substituted for Slave-labour, in the first instance, in cocoa or cotton cultivation; and the Slaves now employed in those occupations will be transferred to the cultivation of sugar.

Common sense points out that, if the Master receive a Slave of equivalent qualities, and consequently of equivalent value, in the stead of the Slave who avails himself of this enactment by obtaining his manumission, he suffers no calculable or appreciable injury. He may say, "There is something in that Slave which I prefer to any other Slave, and therefore I cannot be satisfied with a Slave of equivalent quality;" but such an assumption of value could not be the subject of appraisement; and if the appraisers on their oaths were to furnish him with a Slave of equivalent quality and value, he would have no ground of complaint.

Secondly, if the Proprietor does not actually receive a Slave of equivalent value, but receives a money-price which is, at any moment, *bonâ fide*, capable of producing to him a Slave of equivalent quality or value, and if he prefers to receive the

money rather than the Slave, he cannot be said to suffer any injury.

Thirdly, if he can acquire and command permanently the services of a free-labourer or labourers, who will execute for wages the work previously performed by the Slave,—and if the wages which he pays to that labourer, or those labourers, are no more than the expense which he incurred for the maintenance of his Slave from infancy to age, he will not have a pretext for requiring one single farthing of compensation.

Fourthly, however, supposing that he would be compelled to pay those free-labourers more wages than amounted to the money-value of what he expended in the maintenance of his Slave, if he derived from any source a sufficient sum to pay that extra amount, having received that money-value, he would not have a pretext for further compensation.

Fifthly, if he cannot command the services of a substituted Slave or of a free-labourer, and if, consequently, a certain portion of his fixed capital is to remain unemployed, he cannot be treated with equity (according to the views of the resolution, ‘the equitable consideration of the interests of private property,’) if his Slave be taken away, without paying him an equitable compensation for the injury which he sustains by the loss of that Slave.—These five conditions include all the possible results which may arise out of the

practical execution of the Compulsory Manumission Law.

I now proceed to demonstrate, that this measure of Compulsory Manumission was proposed and sanctioned by the Abolitionists themselves. But it will not be necessary for this purpose to produce the more detailed evidence which I have in my possession, as the following simple exposition will sufficiently establish the fact.

Mr. Buxton, in his Speech of 15th May, 1823, (page 19 of the "Substance of the Debate," published by the Anti-Slavery Society) expressed himself as follows:—"I will now take the liberty of reading a short extract of a letter which, on the 11th of last April, I addressed to my honorable friend opposite, in order to put Lord Bathurst and His Majesty's Government in full possession of our views and intentions on this subject." He then read a passage containing an enumeration of the measures which he wished to be effected. Of these, the 6th was as follows:—"That the provisions of the Spanish Law, fixing by competent authority the value of the Slave, and allowing him to purchase a day at a time, should be introduced."

Now, from whence, under this proposal, does compensation to the Proprietor proceed? Is it not from the labour of the Slave? I individually do not quarrel with the proposition on that account: I do not object to the Slave being acces-

sary to the purchase of his own freedom by his extra industry; but how is this system of purchase compatible with the doctrine, that it would be repugnant to every idea of equity, if England were to discharge any debt which she may owe to the Colonists with the toil and sweat of the Slave?

It may be said, indeed, that this part of Mr. Buxton's scheme was intended to apply only to the existing Slaves; and that he proposed to render all Negro children, born after a certain day, free. But if the principle of exacting a price from the Slave for his own freedom be "repugnant to every idea of equity," its abstract injustice cannot be done away by the limited extent of its practical application.

With respect, however, to the proposal of declaring free all children to be born in future, what did Mr. Canning say in reply to that very Speech of Mr. Buxton? "There is, however, one point
 "in the Honourable Gentleman's statement, on
 "which I certainly entertain a different opinion.
 "I mean the fixing a period at which the children
 "of Slaves shall be free. I doubt whether the
 "measure recommended by the Honourable Gen-
 "tleman would produce that degree of satisfac-
 "tion which he anticipates, and whether it might
 "not produce feelings of an opposite nature. I
 "doubt whether, in its operation, it would not
 "prove at once the least efficient and the most

“ hazardous mode of attaining his own object.” It is well known that the emancipation of Slave children was not included in the recommendations of the Government, and that the only measure which carried with it any principle of emancipation was that of Compulsory Manumission.

I shall now take the liberty of citing those Resolutions which I would willingly have induced the House of Commons to adopt on the 13th of July last.

1. That the Resolutions of this House of the 15th of May 1823, distinctly contemplated, on the one hand, the ultimate participation by the Slaves in His Majesty's Colonies, ‘in those civil rights and privileges enjoyed by other classes of his Majesty's subjects,’ and on the other, the accomplishment of that purpose, subject to the ‘fair and equitable consideration of the interests of private property.’

2. That the changes of law which have been deemed by Parliament the most equitable and expedient for the accomplishment of these two distinct pledges, are to be found in the various Orders in Council which have been issued in the ceded Colonies, and which have been successively laid on the table of the House.

3. That it appears to this House, that the only part of that new system of law which has met with serious remonstrance and protest, in consequence of its tendency being presumed to prejudice the equitable interests of private property, has been those enactments which in the first instance introduced the principle of what has been called **“ Compulsory Manumission.”**

4. That it is the opinion of this House, that, as long as the money-price received by the Master for a manumitted Slave, shall enable him to purchase a Slave of equivalent value, no injury can accrue from the abstraction of such Slave, beyond that character of injury which is at all times inseparable from a forced commutation of property, though attended with the fairest principle of compensation.

5. That it is the opinion of this House, that the clauses introduced into the Order in Council of the 2nd of February 1830, do secure an equitable principle of manumission as far as it is possible to carry such a principle into effect by legislative enactments.

6. That this House is at the same time of opinion that the clauses in that Order in Council, which prohibit absolutely all contribution from private individuals or corporate bodies, towards the manumission of a Slave, require essential modification.

7. That this House fully appreciates the degree of caution with which it is necessary to legislate, in all matters affecting the equitable interests of property, to the conservation of which this House is pledged; and that it will direct its unceasing attention to the cause and effect of this change of legislation in the ceded Colonies, for the purpose of satisfying, in the fullest sense, the distinct and difficult pledges of Parliament, above cited from the Resolutions of 1823, which resolutions equally contemplated the interests of the Master and the well-being of the Slave.

8. That the change of law in the ceded Colonies being now fully and satisfactorily accomplished, with the exception above-mentioned, this House is entirely prepared to expect, that the legislative Colonies will voluntarily and completely incorporate into their respective codes of law, at the earliest possible period, those ameliorations in the law

affecting the Slave population, which are now in complete operation in the ceded Colonies, and which may not hitherto have been adopted by the Colonial Legislatures.

You will perceive that the 7th Resolution was intended to give the West Indian Proprietors a substantive pledge, as far as a Parliamentary Resolution could give it, to watch over the progress of this law of Compulsory Manumission, for the purposes of ascertaining whether, in each individual instance, it did supply equitable compensation, and of securing further compensation to the Proprietors, if, upon inquiry, it should appear to fail in that respect.

You will also perceive that, in the 6th Resolution, I suggested what appears to me to be a most equitable improvement in the Order in Council. I do not see why there should be any absolute exclusion of any funds given for the purpose of assisting a Slave in his self-manumission. I entirely admit, that, to allow private parties in England to subscribe funds, which at any moment might be applied to purchase any number of Negroes on a particular estate, would be liable to the strongest objections; but nothing appears to me less difficult in practice, than to devise a plan of proportionally assisting the industrious Slave with funds to be added to his own earnings, for the purpose of purchasing the freedom of his wife or children, or his

own freedom, under the law of compulsory manumission. This combination of funds appears to be the most practicable mode of accomplishing manumission. The good conduct of the Slave, as vouched by the protector of Slaves, might be made a necessary condition of the application of these funds.

I now beg to call your particular attention to the following considerations. If this law of compulsory manumission be so modified, and if other modifications take place in the law of the ceded Colonies, (should such be necessary) and if the Legislative Colonies adopt this modified law, and embody it in their respective Statute Books, IS THIS GREAT EXPERIMENT TO BE LEFT TO WORK ON ITS OWN WAY, OR IS IT TO BE FOLLOWED UP BY MORE SUMMARY MEASURES OF EMANCIPATION? That is the question for Parliament to determine; in such a manner as to remove all doubt from the minds of those whose interests are affected. I should have wished Parliament to pass the Resolution already quoted, for the purpose of protecting the West Indians, in the event of injury arising to them from the compulsory manumission law. I think they are completely entitled to such a pledge, and that it would be more likely to encourage them to adopt the experiment in a fair spirit; but if more summary measures of manumission are contemplated, I contend that they should be preceded by the most unambiguous and distinct pledge of

“equitable compensation.” If that be done, the particular measure itself is comparatively unimportant to the West Indians; because, whether it be more or less summary, IF THE COMPENSATION BE ADEQUATE, they will have no cause to complain. If Great Britain and Ireland are prepared to come forward with their millions, for the purpose of accelerating the attainment by the Negroes of a state of freedom, let it be considered in what manner those millions can be dispensed most beneficially for that object.

I now proceed to consider the proposition of paying a fixed price to the proprietors of Slaves, in consideration of children born after a certain day being made free. It has been proposed, “That all “slave-children who arrived at the age of seven “years should fall into the hands of Government as “free children, under certain regulations; and that, “in consideration of their so becoming free, instal- “ment payments of five pounds per annum should “be made to the planter, under which he should “receive the sum of thirty-five, thirty, or twenty- “five pounds for each child.

Supposing no objection to exist to the principle of this proposition, it would become necessary to point out, in minute detail, what were these “certain regulations,” and in what manner the Government was to act towards these children when made free, from whence the funds for their education and maintenance were to be derived,

and what was to be their chance of independence and prosperity. But my objection to this proposal is one of principle. I contend that it is an inequitable proposition. I admit that it has been received more favourably than any other, by the majority of those persons who are desirous that Slavery should be abolished, but that compensation should be made to the Proprietors of Slaves. There is, however, one great practical injustice, which would be the consequence of Emancipation effected under the terms of this proposition. No estimate is made of the varying degrees of loss which Proprietors would experience from the cessation of Slave-labour, in consequence of the greater or less quantity of fixed Capital which may exist on different properties, Upon this point, I beg to refer you to my speech of the 6th of March, 1828, in the Appendix, which the information contained in these Letters will, I trust, enable you to understand better than it would be understood by persons whose minds had not been previously directed to the subject. In illustration of the fallacy of this proposal, let me invite your patient attention to the following case:—

A. is a Sugar Planter, whose Slaves are worth ten thousand pounds, and whose fixed capital, in buildings, machinery, &c. necessary for cultivation, is also estimated at ten thousand pounds. B. is a Cotton Planter, whose Slaves are worth ten thousand pounds, but whose fixed capital

does not exceed two thousand five hundred pounds, or one-fourth of the fixed capital of the Sugar Planter. Both A. and B. received a net profit of ten per cent. on their general capital; A. has, therefore, a net revenue of two thousand pounds per annum; B. of twelve hundred and fifty pounds. Let it be supposed that both A. and B. ultimately receive thirty pounds each for one hundred and sixty children. This is taking the increment and decrement of human life at par; but it will be perceived that the argument is not affected by the number. Under this hypothesis, A. receives four thousand eight hundred pounds for his children, and that is all the pecuniary value that he receives. Ultimately, no matter when, the impossibility of cultivating his land by free labour produces a loss to him of his whole twenty thousand pounds, *minus* the four thousand eight hundred. Consequently, putting aside all consideration of interest, or any incidental circumstances, his net loss may be represented as fifteen thousand two hundred pounds. B., the Cotton Planter, receives four thousand eight hundred pounds; but having never embarked more than twelve thousand five hundred pounds, his loss only amounts to seven thousand seven hundred; a little more than half the loss incurred by the Sugar Planter.

This proposition of purchasing children at the same rate of price is founded upon a total ignorance

or forgetfulness of the effect of labour combined with fixed capital, whether in Demerara, England, France, or any other country, in producing a greater sum of value than labour does when combined with a smaller degree of fixed capital.

Let A. be a master manufacturer, who has laid out one hundred pounds for a power-loom, which requires only the labour of one man to produce one hundred yards of cloth per week. Let B. be a manufacturer, who employs three hand-loom weavers, to make one hundred yards of cloth per week, working upon machinery which only cost thirty pounds. If these two master manufacturers were prevented by law from ever employing labourers again, and equally from working their machinery, it is evident that the loss of the one man would be to that of the other in the proportion of ten to three; and, consequently, if one hundred pounds were given to each, it might be an adequate compensation to B., but a very inadequate one to A.

I have now, I trust, redeemed my pledge of laying before you such facts and arguments as are necessary for you well and truly to consider, as a preliminary to any irrevocable judgment on the responsible question of West Indian Slavery.

Is this great experiment to be left to work on its own way according to the recommendations founded on the Resolutions of 1823, fully and absolutely executed? or is it to be followed up by

more summary processes of Emancipation? This is the question which Parliament, in my judgment, ought to decide, in such a manner as to remove all doubt from the minds of those whose interests are affected. If more summary measures be carried into effect, provided that the compensation to West Indian Proprietors be equitable, they will have no special cause of complaint. And if, after a solemn investigation of the subject, the United Kingdom be prepared to come forward with millions for the purpose of accelerating the freedom of the Negroes, let passion and prejudice be thrown aside, when the question is discussed, in what manner those millions may be most beneficially dispensed.

I have the honour to remain,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient humble servant,

R. W. HORTON.

Sudbrook Park, 29th Nov. 1830.

A P P E N D I X.

Speech of the RIGHT HONOURABLE R. WILMOT HORTON, in the House of Commons, on the 6th of March, 1828, on moving for the production of the evidence taken before the Privy Council, upon an Appeal against the Compulsory Manumission of Slaves in Demerara and Berbice.

SIR,

THE motion with which I mean to conclude the observations which I am about to make to the House, is to the following effect:—" That the minutes of evidence " taken before his Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council " in the matter of the Demerara and Berbice Manumission Order in Council be laid on the Table of the House, " and printed for their information." I feel it to be my duty to call the attention of the House very earnestly to the reasons upon which such a course appears to me to be not only expedient but necessary. I beg that it may be distinctly understood, that the step which I am taking has not been in the slightest degree influenced by any reference to my former connexion with his Majesty's Government. As a Privy Counsellor, I attended the investigation which was carried on before that Court; but it is in the performance of my duty as a Member of Parliament, simply, that I now bring forward the subject.

Honourable Gentlemen will be aware, that in May,

1823, certain resolutions were passed in this House, which pledged this House to pursue a particular course of policy, with respect to slaves in the West Indies. The resolution which was then proposed by the Honourable Member for Weymouth, (Mr. Fowell Buxton,) declared, "that the state of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution, and of the Christian religion; and that it ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British Colonies, with as much expedition as may be found consistent with a due regard to the well-being of the parties concerned." That resolution was rejected by the House, and the following resolutions were substituted in its stead:—

"1. That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for ameliorating the condition of the slave population in his Majesty's Colonies.

"2. That through a determined and persevering, but, at the same time, a judicious and temperate enforcement of such measures, this House looks forward to a progressive improvement in the character of the slave population, such as may prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of his Majesty's subjects.

"3. That this House is anxious for the accomplishment of this purpose, at the earliest period that shall be compatible with the well-being of the slaves themselves, with the safety of the colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of private property."

The House will remember that his Majesty's Government were called on to execute these resolutions; and they will permit me to say, that it is necessary, if they wish to be able to judge correctly of the extreme delicacy of the situation in which the Government, and the House

itself, I will venture to say, are now placed, with respect to these resolutions,—that they should give their undivided attention, and look minutely into all the facts which have occurred in this matter, since these resolutions were so passed. I am sorry to be obliged to trespass on the attention of Honourable Gentlemen; but if they take any interest in the welfare of the slave, or in the carrying into effect that part of their resolutions, which proposes to accompany this prospective improvement in the condition of the slave, with an equitable consideration of the interests of private property,—it is necessary that they should attend to that series of circumstances which have occurred, up to the point at which the Berbice Appeal has been brought before the Privy Council. I will first beg leave to read the prayer of the memorial from Demerara and Berbice which has been laid before his Majesty in Council. The memorialists pray “that your Majesty will be graciously pleased not to send forth any Order in Council to enable the slave population of Berbice to obtain their freedom by purchase, without your petitioners being first heard by their Counsel.” With respect to the clause of compulsory manumission,—the only clause to which my observations will make any sort of direct allusion, the history is shortly this. After the resolutions of 1823; pledging this House and the Government to this specific course of reconciling the interests of the master with the well-being of the slave, Lord Bathurst, in a circular despatch, dated the 9th of July in that year, sent out certain instructions to the West Indies, requesting the Legislative Colonies, and directing those which were more immediately under the control of the Crown, to adopt measures in pursuance of the principles contained in that despatch. *In that despatch, however, no allusion was made to the sub-*

ject of compulsory manumission ; but in a despatch dated on the same day, Sir Ralph Woodford, the Governor of Trinidad, was ordered to prepare an Order in Council, or, rather, the draft of one, in which all the instructions contained in the circular despatch of the 9th of July should be embodied, and, at the same time, combined with the existing regulations of the slave law in Trinidad, as they were found to exist in principle and in practice. I should also observe, that the principles involved in the circular instructions of the 9th of July, with the single exception of slave evidence, (upon which there happens now to be a greater degree of accordance between all parties, than upon any other) were all sanctioned by the West Indian Body in England,—at least by those Gentlemen who were considered to represent it,—and were viewed by them as principles, which it would not be inexpedient or dangerous for the West Indian Colonies to adopt.

Sir Ralph Woodford, in obedience to the direct instruction contained in Lord Bathurst's despatch, framed and sent back a draft of an Order in Council, necessarily containing the Spanish law on the subject of manumission, as it existed in the Island of Trinidad. Mr. Canning, in the month of March, 1824, when he presented to this House the papers respecting the melioration of the condition of the slaves, laid down this principle as the principle of the Government,—that it was wise and expedient to collect together all the various measures of improvement that were to be found *in any part* of the West Indies, for the purpose of concentrating them, and making them part and parcel of a general Slave Code for the West Indian Colonies. Consequently, Sir, compulsory manumission, or manumission by appraisement, being found to form part of the law of Trinidad, it was upon these principles con-

sidered expedient that the clause relating to it should form part of the general code, and it was announced by Mr. Canning to this House that such was the case. The Order in Council for Trinidad has been laid upon this table; and the clause relating to Compulsory Manumission, which is contained in it, is identically the same, with the exception of some verbal differences, as that clause of the draft received from Sir Ralph Woodford, which embodied the Spanish law upon the subject. It is necessary to explain to the House, that neither on the part of those Gentlemen who are considered more particularly to represent the slaves, nor on the part of those who are supposed more particularly to represent the West India proprietors, has there been any reclamation made, even up to the present time, of a Parliamentary nature, against this manumission law. I do not mean to say that no allusion to it has ever occurred in the course of occasional discussions; but the sense of Parliament has never been taken with respect to the particular measure. But when it was announced in Demerara, that this, as well as the other provisions of the Trinidad Order were to be extended to Demerara, the Court of Policy (to whom had been intrusted the duty of preparing a general law on the subject, combining and interweaving those provisions with the existing Dutch law) made a strong protest against these compulsory manumission clauses. Protests were sent over to the Secretary of State; difficulties and inconveniences were stated to attach to the law; and it was prayed, either that it might be altogether revoked, or considerably modified. They expressed great unwillingness to adopt that law, and said that they could only submit to it under the consideration of its being imposed upon them by the overruling power with which the mother country, by the con-

stitution of the empire, was invested over the Government of the Colony.

Now, Sir, there have been laid on the Table from time to time, since that period, voluminous despatches in reference to this subject; but, though much information was conveyed in the despatches of the Secretary of State, no law has yet been passed, and no law in Demerara is yet in operation, relating to compulsory manumission. But what I want more particularly to impress upon this House, and especially on His Majesty's Government, is this; that, at the period of the resolutions of 1823, neither the Abolitionists, if I am so to call them,—nor the West Indians either here or in the West Indies,—nor, I will add, with great deference, any other persons—were perfectly aware of the consequences of that law, or of the very different situation in which the Colony was placed in 1823, from that in which it had stood at former periods. And I shall go the whole length of saying, Sir, that if the Abolitionists, as I have heard them declare in this House, and as they have often declared without its walls, are prepared to stand or fall by the law of Trinidad, without modification, they will find that it is completely inoperative; and that it will provide neither for the interests of the master nor the well-being of the slave—both of which, under such a law, precisely worded as it is, will be equally sacrificed.

By the Spanish law, the right of the slave to claim his manumission, *invito domino*, is more or less similar to that which, as appears from history, was in practical operation formerly in Spain, with respect to the redemption of the Moorish population. In fact, as long as there was an unlimited supply of slaves, the working of this law was attended with little inconvenience or difficulty. The slave

who had obtained money enough to purchase his redemption, under this *lex non scripta*, (for a law undoubtedly it must be considered, although it may be extremely difficult to find any written traces of it,) went to his master and claimed his freedom; and the process was then very simple. The master applied to two appraisers, who struck between them a fair price; the master then had the facility of going at once into the slave-market, and of purchasing a slave or slaves, of equal value, so that no serious inconvenience could possibly result from the abstraction of labourers from his estate. In Trinidad, even after the cessation of the African Slave Trade, this law would have remained a law permanently easy in its operation, in consequence of the importations which were then taking place, not unfrequently, into Trinidad, of slaves who were brought from other parts of the West Indies, where the inherent poverty of the soil diminished the value of their labour, and made it more for the interest of the proprietors to sell them to the occupiers of the fertile lands of Trinidad, at the price which their fertility enabled those occupiers to give, than to retain and work them as slaves upon their own estates. The master, therefore, who lost his slave through this right of compulsory manumission, would still have been enabled to purchase another slave, without any difficulty whatever. But the House will not fail to perceive, that when, in addition to the circumstance of the supply of slaves from Africa being prevented altogether, the importation of slaves from other islands into Trinidad was practically prevented, the power of the master to replace his slave became necessarily reduced and contracted. I do not mean to imply that the effect of this changed state of circumstances has at present made it difficult to replace a

manumitted slave upon an estate: but when we legislate, we must consider inevitable tendencies as well as undoubted facts; and no person can doubt that a restricted market has a tendency to produce that difficulty, as well as to increase the value of the slave, and, consequently, to diminish his power of self-manumission.

I proceed now to explain in what respect I consider the law of Trinidad, as established by the Order in Council, to be defective. By a clause in the Trinidad Order in Council, it is prescribed that the "fair and just value" of the slave shall be estimated by two appraisers, the one to be chosen by the owner of the slaves, and the other by the officer who has the title of "Protector of Slaves;" and in case of a difference of opinion between these two appraisers, the question is to be decided by an umpire appointed by the Chief Justice of the island. Nothing can appear, certainly, to be more simple, or less complex, than these directions; and yet the House will be pleased to observe, *that they lay down no principle on which this appraisement or value is to be made.* Now, there was no difficulty in the matter, so long as a slave-market continued open; but as the market contracts, so must the difficulty increase of *defining the principle* upon which this fair and equitable appraisement is to be made. In fact, the whole of this question turns upon one single point; and that is the difficulty of the proprietors finding any slave adapted exactly to supply the place of the slave whom he may lose by manumission or purchase, and consequently of the appraisers estimating the equitable money value of the manumitted slave. As long, however, as the principle of *equivalent substitution* can be applied (which was the principle laid down by Lord Bathurst in his despatches, in the case of Pamela Munro), that is, as long as the price awarded

will enable the proprietor practically to replace upon his estate the labour of the abstracted slave, no material difficulty will be found to exist; but that term once passed, difficulties crowd in upon our legislation, which it is well worth while to anticipate, and for which it is just to provide.

In 1823, the country, I am bound to say, was deluged by assurances, that it was the most gross mistake ever committed, to suppose that free labour would not execute the duties of sugar cultivation more beneficially for the purposes of the master than slave labour; and every man must wish heartily, and from the bottom of his soul, that such were the fact. Unfortunately, the doubts I have long entertained on the subject have been but too well confirmed. It is for the purpose of pointing out to the House what are the difficulties of this subject, and in order to show, at some future period, how the evidence which has been collected bears upon these difficulties, that I am induced to move for the production of the papers which I propose to call for,—the minutes of evidence taken before the Privy Council in the matter of the Berbice and Demerara Manumission Order in Council. I am confident that the study of these minutes, and of the very admirable and powerful speeches of the learned Counsel, both on the one side and the other, will afford the most satisfactory and complete information on the subject which Honourable Gentlemen can obtain upon the question; and I will venture to add, that few men can be aware of the difficulties of this question, who will not admit the necessity of such information, on a subject of such subtlety and complexity as this, involving, so decidedly, the interests of all our West Indian possessions. If Honourable Gentlemen will examine the despatches of Lord Bathurst, they will there find it laid

down, that the principle on which this appraisement was to take place was to be the principle of *equivalent substitution*, that is to say, as I have already stated, that if the master, through this claim of manumission, should lose his slave, he was to be enabled, by the price which he received, to procure a slave whose services would be equivalent to those of the manumitted slave. Now, the papers for which I shall move will show the difficulties which may arise in the attempt to carry this principle into practical effect.

Sir, in insisting upon the reality of these difficulties, I am only anxious to show that they are great; and that a thorough examination of them is indispensably necessary. The resolutions of the House of Commons, to which I first adverted, distinctly involve two propositions. They contemplate, on the one hand, the progressive arrival of the slave at a state of freedom; and on the other, they contemplate, with equal clearness and an equal avoidance of all ambiguity, his so arriving, under the incident of *equitable provision being, at the same time, made for the interest of the master.*

The House I am sure will allow, that it is more easy to frame sentences than to execute purposes. The slave proprietor can only derive his profits from the cultivation of his estate; and when that labour, or any material portion of it, upon which its cultivation depends, is abstracted without substitution, the very capital of which he depends for the support of himself and of his family, is proportionably diminished or deteriorated. The whole difficulty of the case turns upon this point: that, in the present state of things, there is a limited market for slaves; whereas, the cultivation of produce, of sugar more especially, must be carried on by a body of slaves working together. It is necessary, moreover, that the labour of these slaves

should be continuous, (that is, that it should go on without interruption,) and that it should be capable of being obtained at all seasons and upon any emergency. As long as an equivalent slave can be obtained by the money-price awarded for the slave who shall manumit himself, it will be very difficult to demonstrate an injury requiring extra compensation. Again, if there were free labourers prepared to work for such wages as the money price received for the abstracted slave, coupled with the diminution of expense incident to the slave system, would enable the proprietor to give, there could be still less ground for extra compensation. But if we would legislate justly and permanently, we must consider all the contingencies, as well as circumstances, which attach to the subject.

If, with respect to free labour, as it is called, and to the principle of "bettering condition," we apply the analogies of a densely-peopled country in a temperate climate, to the thinly-peopled colonies which we hold under the Torrid Zone, our reasoning will be false and futile. If the same degree of necessity for which the labourer is *here* compelled to provide, equally existed in the West Indies, we should find that the same effects would be produced. But before Honourable Gentlemen take for granted, that the principle of bettering condition universally and equally applies to all men under every probable variation of circumstance and situation, they had better make careful and detailed inquiries into the relative situation of the English labourer and of the West Indian slave.

Sir, I am mainly anxious that the proceedings of this House should show that we have not legislated in ignorance, but have taken great pains to investigate a very difficult subject; and that, in a case in which the interests of so many thousands among us, as well as of the slaves them-

selves, are conclusively involved, those persons who are looked upon as being peculiarly the advocates of the slave should give us the opportunity of a complete and deliberate examination of the arguments which they adduce, before they call upon us to legislate imperatively and definitively on the subject. I have said before, and I repeat, that when those whom I will call, for distinction's sake, the Abolitionists, declare that they are prepared to rest upon the Trinidad Order, unchanged and unmodified, they will rest upon a law which will either be totally inoperative, or practically unjust to the master as to the slave; or alternately to both parties.

No criterion has been defined by which it can be ascertained that the appraiser, though put upon his oath, has justly appraised the value of the slave to be substituted. It therefore rests upon the texture of his mind, or upon the conscientiousness of his principles, to assign a fair equivalent. The difficulty of the law turns upon the nature of the principle upon which this appraisement is to be made. It is perfectly obvious, that if a sound and correct principle be not declared in the body of the law itself, the most serious injustice may be inflicted upon the parties most interested in its operation. Every body, Sir, who has at all attended to this subject, must see, I should imagine, that it is the most extravagant of mistakes to suppose that all slaves should be estimated at a rate of equal value. It must be apparent, that the individual who has a large fixed capital employed in the cultivation of his property in the West Indies, naturally expects larger returns than the man who has a small capital so invested. If you take away a slave from this large owner, on a principle of parity of prices, you inflict a much greater injury than you would do in the case of a

man of less fixed capital. This position may be illustrated by analogies ; though I do not mean to say that analogies are necessarily to be considered as of the nature of proof. Supposing, in England, the case of two farms of equal quantity of land, but upon one of which its occupier or owner has expended 5,000*l.*, while on the other the proprietor has expended 1,000*l.*, the stock upon both being equal, and supposing that a law were to pass, under which *he could not* replace the labour of a man or horse who might be abstracted from this farm,—will it not be immediately perceived, that the injury resulting from the abstraction of labour will be greater to the farmer who has laid out the larger sum upon property which he is thus disabled from cultivating, than to him who has expended the smaller sum ? If we apply a similar case to the West Indies, shall we not perceive a similar result ? If any Honourable Gentleman supposes that I am raising this question of difficulty upon any other principle but that which I and every other individual interested in this subject must wish to establish—namely, a fair execution of our Resolutions, they mistake me. I wish to adopt every proceeding which may be most conciliating as well as effectual. It has been suggested that it would be a wise principle to purchase the children of slaves ; and it has been proposed that *one uniform price* should be fixed for this purpose. Now, if you compel a man with a large fixed capital employed in the cultivation of his lands, to manumit the slave children belonging to him, and if you give him only the same compensation which you give to another, who has a smaller fixed capital in proportion to the number of his slaves, the injury which you do to him is manifest. Why do you extend a greater injury to the planter with the large fixed capital by such a measure ?

Because the former is justified in expecting larger returns from his property, in proportion to the money which has been expended in placing his larger proportion of fixed capital upon it.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, which I have thought it necessary to point out to the House, I cannot shrink from the avowal, that human ingenuity, in my opinion, cannot devise any *intermediate course* between two courses, the one, the purchase by the State, at the present, or some defined future period, of the property of the present holders of slaves, &c.—the other, the natural transmutation of slavery into a *status* of freedom, after the occurrence of all that series of circumstances, and all that lapse of time, (by some witnesses estimated at the rate of centuries,) which the experience of the world has shown to be necessary for the working out such a progressive change;—*unless such intermediate course be compulsory manumission, or, in other words, manumission by appraisalment, invito domino.* Observe, then, the difficulty and delicacy of our situation; on the one hand, we are called upon by the resolutions of Parliament to effect the progressive emancipation of the slave; on the other, to respect at the the same time the rights of private property; and the only path by which we can arrive at those apparently incompatible results, must be by adopting some middle course. The questions then are—Are we prepared to effect a wholesale purchase? Do we propose to leave the remedy of the existing evil to the lapse of time? or do we intend to adhere to this principle of compulsory manumission? Now, here lies the difficulty of the problem, of executing the fair spirit of the Resolutions of 1823.

If we mean to reconcile our conduct to the principles of justice, we must condescend to look into the difficulties of

the case ; and depend upon it, Sir, that in proportion as we convince the West Indian proprietors throughout our West Indian Colonies, that we have both seen and studied those difficulties ; and that we are as anxious to execute that part of the resolutions of 1823, which secures the interest of the master, as we are to execute that other part, which calls upon us to provide for the protection of the slave, in such proportion will be the degree of our success. When this shall have been done, we shall have a better right to expect the general consent and concurrence of the Legislative Colonies of Great Britain in those measures of melioration, which I contend they may carry into effect, and ought to carry into effect, without any prejudice to their real interests.

I could wish the House and the Country, also, to understand, that the principle upon which this compulsory manumission clause is to be carried into effect by appraisement, ought as speedily as possible to be defined, if it is our intention to carry that law into effect in Demerara and Berbice. I have been merely setting forth the difficulties which attend that clause ; but I do say, that it is matter of paramount necessity, that the West Indians should know and feel that, in dealing with this question, we have no desire to consider other than their equitable interests ; and that we are determined to carry into effect the measures of amelioration which Parliament, in its wisdom, has already sanctioned, even though we propose to consider what modification should be made in this particular clause, so seriously affecting their property.

I am sorry, Sir, that my Honourable and Learned Friend, the Member for Winchelsea, is at this moment absent ; what I have said does not require his presence, or the presence of any other man, to sanction (as I am merely

offering such observations as I conceive to be necessary, in proposing that these papers be laid upon your Table); but I am sorry that I have not the pleasure of seeing him in his place. I desire to provoke no argument; I am not idly starting objections; I am merely stating those difficulties which no man has had better opportunities, or more frequent occasion of observing, than I have; and, at the same time, I have been solicitous to vindicate the conduct of the late Government, in respect of those difficulties. Had not the Honourable and Learned Member for Winchelsea talked about the principle of compensation, and suggested some analogies, in reference to it, I would not trespass any further on the time of the House. My Honourable and Learned Friend was pleased to exclaim, "Compensation! what a strange idea that is!" and then he asked, "Who ever heard of any proposition so absurd as compensation in respect of the Silk Trade; the parties engaged in which might as well have asked for compensation as the slave owners." I should have no difficulty in pointing out to the House a plain and simple distinction, which at once disposes of that objection. It has been admitted, both by the Berbice and Demerara proprietors, that with respect to all the other suggestions of this Government, they are perfectly willing to carry them into effect (a most important admission); but that to this alone, respecting compulsory manumission, they object, as a law which would be highly prejudicial to their interests. The West Indians rest their claim for compensation, as it appears to me, upon this ground: that such compensation is due for property abstracted, and not on the grounds of an injury arising incidentally out of any general legislation. The question is, do the manumission clauses secure them that equitable compensation to which they conceive themselves entitled,

under the terms of the third Resolution of 1823? We know that in this country, if a canal is to be dug, a road widened, or a street pulled down, for the purpose of making a better or a new one,—although the principle of our law requires that private convenience shall give way to the execution of works which are of presumed national advantage and utility, every man immediately affected by the carrying such measures into effect, is entitled to compensation in a certain degree, for injuries thereby accruing to his private property; and though, at first sight, any such compensation would seem most difficult to be assessed, it is nevertheless true, that, under continually recurring circumstances, it is a principle which is carried into effect without difficulty. The West Indian may be admitted (under the operation of these manumission clauses) to be in a situation analagous to that of an individual whose house or land is taken from him under the clauses of a Street or Canal Bill; but he would have no conceivable claim to compensation, if Parliament should think proper to make an alteration in the duties at present imposed on the importation of East India sugars. Now take a familiar illustration of this principle: if a London tradesman, living in Bond Street, complained that his property in his house in Bond Street was injured by the building of Regent Street in its vicinity, he would be laughed at, should he apply for compensation on that account; but a man in Swallow Street, whose house had been pulled down to make way for a part of Regent Street, to be built on its scite, would have an undoubted right, which would be allowed. Now, let this principle be applied to the case of the West Indian. If he were to apply for compensation, in consequence of Parliament making any diminution of the duties now imposed upon the introduction of East India sugar, his application would

be frivolous ; but when in the discharge of our duty as legislators, we enact a law, under which *his property* is compulsorily abstracted from him, he has a right to look for compensation. The question is, will he receive it under the effect of the manumission clauses ? I offer no opinion — I only wish to invite the earnest attention of Parliament to the consideration of this particular point. I think the House will admit with me, that if it had been true that free labour could and would at once be substituted for slave labour, all the difficulties of the case would at once have vanished. That West Indian must be insane who would not contemplate with satisfaction, the equitable substitution of a system of free labour for a state of slavery with all its incidents. But this, Sir, is really not the question. We must look stedfastly at facts, and not at speculations. He is justified in saying to the advocates for free labour, “ You are bound to show me what, as yet, you have failed to show, namely, that there is a chance of free labour being so substituted.” If he receives, by virtue of the price awarded to him, a real equivalent, he can require no more. If the price adjudged by the appraisers be such as will, not in theory only, but in practice and in fact, replace on his estates a slave as competent, on the principle of equivalency ; under such circumstances, a claim of further compensation is clearly inadmissible. But the West Indians, when they complain of our legislation on this matter, say, “ You do not follow up to the letter that part of your Resolution, which pledges you to an equitable consideration of our interests ;” and all that I contend for is, that the Government should regulate well and carefully the principle of appraisement, before they enter into any final legislation upon the subject. In other words, they ought to put the proprietor in that situation in which he

can practically replace the slave, or the labour of the slave, on his estate. We must not, however, carry our refinements too far, when we consider the doctrine of equivalent substitution. For example, supposing two estates similarly circumstanced, and that on each estate there is to be found a slave, a boiler for example, who has great moral influence over the gang upon that estate, and is an admirable slave in every respect, it is clear that an exchange of these slaves from one estate to the other would, by the terms of the proposition, be a complete instance of "equivalent substitution;" and yet, necessarily, some prejudice might accrue upon both estates, until that ascendancy had been gained over the slaves on their estates by the transferred slaves, which existed previously to the change upon each. But no man can suggest a principle of criterion of value in this instance, by which such detriment is to be compensated beyond that of "good will," as it is termed, in cases of appraisement of this country. Such unappreciable detriment is inevitably involved in the principle of forcible abstraction of property, whether in England or in the West Indies. So in the case of the substitution of a slave, upon the principle of equivalent value, who had been used to a different system of cultivation, arising from inherent difference of soil. But if the West Indian asks me, "Do you not injure my property, by taking from me the slave who has been reared upon it, and leaving me to find a substitute, who, though equivalent in moral and physical qualities, has no knowledge of the peculiar culture of my estate?"—I answer, "I admit the possibility of injury, but I have no remedy to offer beyond a money price, involving the principle, as far as it can be carried into effect, of equivalent substitution;" and I make the same answer to the householder who is ejected

from Swallow Street. I believe, speaking generally, that there is no quality, mental or corporeal, which may not be estimated in money. Another difficulty incident to this question is, how is the price to be assessed, in a case where no equivalent slave can be purchased? I admit this to be a contingent difficulty; but it is one, into the consideration of which I do not feel it necessary to enter upon the present occasion.

The Honourable and Learned Member for Winchelsea stated yesterday, that I had argued that compensation ought to have been agreed upon, before any discussion on any other part of the question had been proceeded with. Sir, I never argued any such proposition. The House will perceive, however, that though, as far as mere measures of amelioration are concerned, they are free to adopt any course they please, by recommending strongly, where recommendation may seem to be the more proper course to be pursued, or in other cases by practically enforcing them, they should cautiously avoid any act of improvident legislation, which affects the property of the master, as distinct from the improvement of the condition of the slave; and they should equally do this, whether with reference to former pledges or otherwise.

I regret the absence of my Honourable and Learned Friend; but when he tells me, as I was told yesterday, that I have been opposed to the Abolitionists, I must beg to inquire of what class of Abolitionists he is speaking? In this House, I conceive, we have no discretion on the subject; we are all bound to carry into effect the Resolutions of 1823; both we and the other House of Parliament are equally pledged to this course of proceeding. Now, Sir, according to my notion of the spirit and effect of these Resolutions, I may safely repeat the challenge

which I gave to my Honourable and Learned Friend, in the course of the last Session, or to any other man, to show that I have ever said, written, or done any thing upon this question, which has not had for its object their fair accomplishment. I cannot help, and am not responsible for, the opinions of other people. Some men may contend that the Resolutions passed in 1823 did not pledge us to follow the course to which Parliament in the ensuing Session agreed. I do not concur in this opinion; but I may regret that inquiry upon particular points did not precede legislation. When these Resolutions talk of gradually advancing the slave, till he shall be put in respect of civil rights on a par with other of his Majesty's subjects, I am bound to assert my belief to be that they do contemplate a state of freedom. On the other hand, when I read those Resolutions, I am equally convinced that they intend that private property and that the interests of the master shall be respected. It was doubtless very easy to compose these Resolutions; but the terms involve a tremendous and responsible difficulty. At the time they passed, this House and the country were led to believe that their operation would have been more easy, in consequence of the assurances so widely disseminated, that slavery was an useless excrescence, and might be got rid of *at once* without injury to the proprietors of the slaves.

I beg to assure the House, that the Privy Council took every sort of pains, as will be observed in their minutes, to bring together all the evidence which it might be possible to collect, with a view of showing the practicability of substituting free labour for slave labour; and the attempt entirely failed. Instructions to this effect were given to Mr. Common Sergeant Denman and Mr. Serjeant Bosanquet; and they were requested, when they could find evi-

dence to show that the difficulties of such substitutions were, in reality, less than the Berbice appellants had represented them to be, to bring it forward. Every facility was given to them to procure that evidence, and the result was altogether unsatisfactory. I may state that I exerted myself very earnestly for the same purpose, but certainly without effect. This was no fault of mine; and I have now only to call on those who take an interest in the freedom of the slaves, if they think I have at all exaggerated difficulties, which, on the contrary, I think I have proved to exist, to any legislation upon this matter, to come forward and show us that those difficulties are ideal, and that no man is entitled to bring them forward as substantive objections to the compulsory clauses of the Trinidad Order, being at once sanctioned and enforced in Demerara and Berbice *without modification*: and the practical question arises, what is to be the nature and character of such modification?

I can as little admit to my Honourable Friend, that this momentous question allows of being disposed of, by the result of any arithmetical reference to the several points attended to, or not attended to, by the Legislative Assemblies of the Colonies. I refer, Sir, to some intimations of that Honourable Gentleman, very recently made by him, on producing a list of the various matters contained in the several communications from the British Government to the Colonies, which had or had not been complied with by those Colonies. At the same time, I see no reason why enactments of a remedial nature might not be carried into general effect. I do again declare, that if you desire to conciliate the proprietors of the slaves, before you legislate finally with respect to their property, you should endeavour to prove to them, beyond the power

of doubt, your sincere disposition to protect their just interest. But, above all, if you mean permanently to keep up that community of interest, which should be maintained, as far as possible, between the slave and his master, you are bound not to place either in such a position that he must necessarily come into collision with the other. No pecuniary advantage can accrue to the master, no benefit can result to the slave, if either of these parties should unhappily be permanently opposed against the other, through the effect of a hasty and indiscreet legislation. Even in this country, with reference to the intimate relations of parent and child, if trustees are authorised to apply property to the benefit of the child, independent of the consent of the parents, it is necessary for them to proceed with caution, to prevent possible collision; such is the jealousy of interference with property. That West Indian planter best consults his own interests, who most consults the feelings of his slaves. I would add, also, that coercion, I am convinced, will not succeed with them. It is a mode of treatment which is sure to fail. Let me observe upon the great difference which is to be remarked between the slave of the present day, and the slave as he was found while the African slave trade was still in existence; and with respect to which difference I think we have to complain that it is very much overlooked by many West Indians. During the period of that slave trade, the slave was imported from Africa with all his feelings excited, and all his indignation aroused, and with resentments constantly kept alive by the melancholy comparison which he drew between that state of savage freedom from which he had just been snatched, and the state of bondage and of servile labour into which he was about to enter. But the state of the Creole slave, as it now exists, is very

different. He has never known any other condition of life; his recollections are not imbittered by these comparisons, and, in fact, all the moral suffering which was the lot of the African slave at the time of his importation into the West Indies, is spared to the Creole native in our Colonies, in his present improved condition. It only remains, then, for this House carefully to conduct this great experiment, under which he is gradually emerging, as it were, into a state of ultimate freedom; and, if we can only avoid crimination and recrimination, we shall do more to effect the object of the Legislature of this country, the object of every man who is animated by feelings of justice and humanity, than we can possibly hope to do by any other means. It is necessary for us to reconcile the pledge which we have given to accomplish that experiment, with the declaration we have made, that we will protect the property of the West Indian owner. For myself, Sir, I presume it is superfluous for me to protest that I have not been animated, on this occasion, by feelings of a personal nature, or by any other object but the desire to discharge my public duty. I know of no one who does not consider with me, that it is abstractedly desirable to put an end to the state of slavery; but there are others who inconsiderately contend, as it appears to me, that if we really wish to put an end to that state, the Legislature, being possessed of the power, ought immediately to exercise it. If the House is anxious, however, to prevent evil consequences in the Colonies, in proportion to its power will be its inclination to consider the subject reasonably, and to present an example of forbearance. The planters in Demerara and Berbice have expressed their readiness to accept the legislation recommended by Parliament upon every other point except this

of compulsory manumission, as now presented for their adoption. The House should unchangeably keep in view, that there is a distinction in principle between melioration and interference with property. At all events, Sir, I think more will be done by expressing a disposition to act with practical equity towards the planters, than by any other means whatever. It is a circumstance much felt in the Colonies, and one which no doubt has given rise to much of the irritation which prevails there, that we, who are here, legislate on this subject without any hazard to our own purses or persons. I admit, Sir, that this should not prevent us from doing our duty to the community at large; but still some forbearance is due to those who are affected in purse and person, and whose nearest interests, and the interests of whose children, and of all who are dependent upon them, might be hazarded, not by malevolent intentions, but by the mere indulgence of gratuitous benevolence unattended with adequate information. I shall not trespass on the time of the House any longer, but to express my thanks for the attention with which I have been heard, and I shall conclude by moving, "That
" an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, that he
" will be graciously pleased to direct that the Minutes of
" Evidence before the Privy Council, in the matter of the
" Demerara and Berbice Manumission Order, may be
" laid before the House."

POSTSCRIPT.

Sudbrook Park, Dec. 2, 1830.

SINCE the preceding pages were printed, the Anti-Slavery Society, in their Monthly Publication, have completely misrepresented many of the observations and arguments in my First Letter.

I shall take the earliest opportunity of correcting these misrepresentations, and of demonstrating the falsity, absurdity, and bad faith of a charge which the Anti-Slavery Society bring against me, that I have been the uniform Apologist of Negro Slavery, and the Abettor and Champion of every Colonial Abuse.

I shall not, however, limit myself to mere defence. I shall lay before you an *exposé* of the principles, conduct, and object of their accredited organ, the Anti-Slavery Reporter, in whose pages these libels against me are to be found.

R. W. H.

From the author

AN

ADDRESS

FROM

THE LIVERPOOL SOCIETY

FOR THE

Abolition of Slavery,

ON

THE SAFEST AND MOST EFFICACIOUS MEANS

OF PROMOTING THE

GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE NEGRO SLAVES

IN THE

British West India Islands,

PREPARATORY TO THEIR BECOMING FREE LABOURERS,

AND ON THE EXPECTED

CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH CHANGE.

LIVERPOOL,

Printed by Jonathan & George Smith.

1824.

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AN ADDRESS, &c.

THE LIVERPOOL SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY, adhering to the primary object of its institution, that of obtaining authentic information respecting the nature and effects of Negro Slavery, and communicating the same to the public, in order that correct ideas may be entertained on the subject, as well by those who conceive themselves to be interested in its support, as by those who contend for its abolition, have not thought it incumbent on them, as a body, to enter into the discussions which have lately taken place respecting the impolicy of Negro Slavery in a commercial point of view. Not that they conceive such question is not a proper and important subject of discussion, or because they entertain any doubt that from the investigations that have already taken place, it will be found to be impolitic as well as unjust; but because the objections of this Society to the continuance of Negro Slavery, are founded on its inherent injustice and inhumanity, and cannot be modified, or relinquished, by any decision that may relate to subjects of expediency only.

For the same reason, the Society does not conceive it necessary to take a prominent part in the questions now agitated respecting the conduct of the master towards the slave—

whether the authority of the one over the other be exercised with mildness or severity. That in many instances the slaves are treated with as much humanity as the nature of laborious slavery will admit, the Society has not the smallest doubt; but the Society has before stated that its objection is to slavery itself, under whatever form it appears, or however it may be carried on. It is the relation of master and slave, injurious alike to the moral disposition, principles, and character of both; it is the degradation of a human being to a condition on a level with that of a brute; it is the spectacle of a great and powerful nation priding itself on its liberty, its generosity, and its prosperity, yet committing a crime of the deepest dye against a defenceless and unoffending people,—that concentrates the attention, and calls for the efforts of the Society, to place this subject in its true light, and to endeavour, to the best of its power, to suggest the most safe, speedy, and effectual means that may lead to the termination of such an acknowledged evil.

In thus stating the grounds of its own proceedings, the Society is convinced it is joined by the voice of the nation at large, which, at length awakened to a just sense of the enormity of its offence, has avowed an almost unanimous determination to free itself from the guilt of its further continuance. This sentiment has been expressed from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, in a manner which has already produced the most important results. Nor, whilst the nation thus acknowledges its guilt, and calls upon the legislature to remove it, does it judge itself with undue severity or injustice. The nation is, in fact, the offender; and it is incumbent on the nation to see that the offence is removed. Nor are we to suppose that the present holders of Colonial possessions, as such, are necessarily culpable in a more peculiar manner than the rest of their fellow-subjects, it being well known that Colonial, like any other kind of

Property, has in part devolved upon its present possessors by acts not their own, and under institutions which had been established long before they came into existence. We therefore by no means consider ourselves as acting in a spirit of hostility, or opposition to the Colonial proprietors, or as promoting measures injurious to their best and most permanent interests. If indeed we could combine the views and efforts of the mother country and the Colonial proprietors in one common cause, there is reason to presume that means might be adopted, which, without compromising the safety, injuring the property, or infringing on the claims of the proprietors, would advance the slaves in the scale of civilization, by the regular communication of moral and religious instruction, and the concession of domestic and personal rights; till they partake of the character of a well regulated peasantry. That such a state might be established, by kind and judicious means, not only without loss or danger, but with great advantage to the master, there is strong reason to believe; as every approximation to the cultivation of the land by free labour, will be found, not only to be a diminution of expense, but in due time to improve the quality, and increase the value of the soil. It is by this union of exertion, information, ability, and object, that the difficulties which present themselves can be best surmounted, the apprehended evils avoided, and a state of society gradually introduced, which there is every reason to believe will hereafter be considered as the true foundation of the prosperity of our West Indian possessions.

So far, indeed, is this Society from entertaining an opinion, that a just and reasonable improvement in the character and condition of the slave population will be attended with danger to the proprietors, that they conceive such danger rests in a contrary course; and that an

avowed opposition in the Colonies to the earnest wishes of the British nation, cannot fail to give rise to consequences deeply to be lamented in every point of view ; but which are chargeable only on those who are the wilful and voluntary cause of them, and not upon the friends and promoters of Negro emancipation, whose views are wholly concentrated in the well-being, improvement, and happiness of this integral portion of the British dominions. The Society cannot, therefore, but perceive, with the greatest anxiety, the measures of resistance resorted to in some of the islands, and the examples of riot and violence which have in some few instances unhappily occurred. Nor can they forbear to express their indignation and surprise at the attempts that have been made to charge the promoters of Negro emancipation with being the cause of disorders and calamities that could only have arisen from an adherence to that system of oppression, which it is their most earnest desire gradually to mitigate, and finally to remove. From the responsibility involved in any consequences which can be fairly imputed to its measures, the Society is in no degree inclined to shrink ; but they protest against the disposition which has been manifested to charge them with every disaster of whatever kind which may occur in the Colonies, whether arising from those elements of danger and discord which are inherent in the very system, or from the violence and indiscretion of the Colonists themselves. The Society, therefore, avail themselves of this opportunity to repeat their decided resolution to persevere by all lawful, just, and peaceable measures, in carrying forwards the great work in which they have engaged ; without being deterred by unfounded aspersions, either of those who misunderstand their object, or of those who, having abandoned the cause in which they had engaged, have inconsiderately and injuriously imputed to them measures which

they never contemplated, and sentiments which they have expressly disavowed.

The present is to the Colonial proprietors an important crisis. Whether it will prove advantageous or injurious, must depend upon themselves. Alrcady they feel the consequences of the present system, and are undersold by the produce of other parts of the world. Under these circumstances, protecting duties and bounties have been extended to them by the parent country, and they still solicit further assistance. "Let them ask themselves, whether the British people, now aware of the nature of the support they thus afford, and finding that they tax themselves for no other purpose than to perpetuate a practice at which their feelings revolt, will be likely long to continue a support which renders them participators of the guilt? and whether the avowal of a determination in the Colonists to persevere in an opposition to the mother country, must not defeat every reasonable expectation of continued aid ?

In thus expressing its desire for the favourable disposition and co-operation of the Colonial proprietors, this Society has not deviated from the principles upon which it is founded, or the language which it originally employed ; having in its former Declaration expressly admitted that, "with every disposition on the part of the Colonial proprietors to adopt a different system, there must be some necessary precautions, some deliberate and gradual process, which should progressively give to the slave the feelings of independence, without the danger of licentiousness ; and enable him to perceive that the necessity of providing for his own subsistence, though less degrading, is not less imperative, than that under which he had before been compelled to return to his daily task."

We trust, then, it will not be objected to us, that in thus endeavouring to engage all those who are most nearly interested in the welfare of our West India population, in united efforts for its promotion, we are advocating a forlorn or a hopeless cause. If, however, there be some persons on whom the striking change of public opinion, with respect to the continuance of slavery, has not yet produced sufficient conviction, the Society hope to be permitted, in a few words, to inquire into the reasons of this adherence to a system denounced through civilized and enlightened society, and into the results which can alone be expected to arise from it. Will it be said by the defenders of compulsory labour, that the present condition of our West India Colonies is such as to display a manifest superiority over that, by which the same articles are produced by free labour in other parts of the world? Or is it not, on the contrary, admitted in the most explicit terms, that such articles may be, and are produced by voluntary labourers, at a much lower price than they can be afforded from our own Colonies? and that protecting duties are necessary to enable the British planter to contend with those of other states? May we further be permitted to ask, what is the nature of a protecting duty or bounty? Or why a country should tax itself, in order to support a portion of its subjects in a trade or pursuit, which they cannot continue without it? Undoubtedly, because there is reason to believe, that by a temporary assistance, such trade or employment will be enabled to recover itself, and remunerate the country for its support. But will any one be now found to assert, that the continued and invariable cultivation of our Colonial possessions, by slave-labour, will be likely to produce such a result? Or would its most strenuous advocates choose to fix a period when the bounties now granted

might safely terminate, and the protecting duties be withdrawn? Or is there not, on the contrary, every reason to conclude, that in many of our Islands, a considerable deterioration of the soil has taken place, in consequence of the long and uniform continuance of slave-cultivation, and that a further perseverance in the same system, will produce still more injurious effects? When we look at the recent improvements in agriculture, and the increase of produce in the parent country, and consider the stationary or diminished crops of our Colonial possessions, and the difficulty with which they contend with their rivals for a market, we naturally seek for the cause in the expense of labour, the want of manures, and the consequent exhaustion of the soil, or in other words, in *causes inseparable from the continuance of Slavery*; which, from all the information we have been enabled to obtain on the subject, as well from the United States of America, as the West Indies, appears to be more expensive than free labour, wherever they have been brought into competition.

Having thus briefly endeavoured to state the *expediency* of the plan we have ventured to recommend, we hope we may now be allowed to add a few words as to its *practicability*.

If by the term *practicability* be understood the mere power of setting the slaves at liberty, certain it is, that they who claim an absolute right of property, can relinquish it whenever they think fit; but this is not the practicability to which we allude. Such a separation, inconsiderately and suddenly accomplished, and particularly if effected by great numbers at once, could scarcely fail to be productive of consequences highly injurious to all the parties. The habits and dispositions induced by the long continuance of personal slavery, cannot be instantaneously corrected or removed; nor can we expect that the slave

can at once rise to the character of the free man, and act under the influence of feelings to which he is yet a stranger. It is only by a gradual, humane, and steady process, or rather by a combination of suitable means, that we can expect to attain this object; and towards this more just and desirable state of things some progress has already been made; but the steps already taken, render the timely and cautious adoption of further measures indispensably necessary. The dismissal of the whip as the stimulant of labour, has already been directed by his Majesty's Government, and implicitly assented to in some of the Colonies. It must however, be observed, that even this first step in the course of improvement, cannot be accomplished without combining with it others, to be simultaneously adopted. No person, slave or free, will labour without a motive. The motive of the slave is, at present, the fear of punishment. Withdraw this, and he will work no more than a brute animal. Accordingly, it has been said, with the strictest truth, that through all our plantations, the produce is obtained by the immediate discipline of the lash. It is evident, therefore, that in removing this, we must substitute another motive to supply its place; and this motive can only be one that shall apply to the mind, or reason, of the being to be influenced. Here then we see, intelligibly marked, the eternal distinction which nature and justice have placed, between the treatment of human beings and brutes; and that to apply to the former the discipline of the latter, is to degrade the image of God, and to trample his best gift under foot—a crime the more odious, as it appears from the example of almost all the rest of the world, in every variety of soil and climate, that such a system of compulsive labour is by no means requisite to the abundant production of all the necessaries of life; and that the ground is not more

willing to bring forth its fruits, than man is willing, under the influence of moral motives, and without compulsion, to cultivate it. What then is the motive, that in withdrawing the whip, we must immediately substitute in its place? Undoubtedly one that shall act upon the *mind* of the slave, as a perpetual stimulus to compel him to labour; and this can be no other than the hope of being able, by his exertions, to attain to a situation where he may, eventually, rest from his fatigues, and dispose of his time by his own will, or, in other words, may become free. Give him, then, the power of purchasing his own freedom, and the opportunity of employment to obtain the means of effecting it. Short of this, all that can be offered to him is of no avail; but this includes in itself every thing desirable in human life—peace, health, domestic happiness, education, religion, respectability, and repose; and however distant in the view, yet grant but the possibility of attainment, and not a moment of all the long interval will be lost. Every morning's sun will rise brighter than the former—and if the eagerness of the effort do not counteract the practicability of attainment, it is impossible that it should not be crowned with success.

For this purpose it will, however, be necessary that a *progressive* system should be established, by which the *habits of industry* and the *relaxation of slavery* should keep equal pace with each other: and it should be placed in the power of the slave, by his own efforts, gradually to purchase his emancipation. This might be done, by fixing a reasonable value, and allowing him to pay it at the rate of a day, or half a day, in the week, as already practised in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies. Thus, if we were to adopt the idea of Mr. Barham, who estimates the slave at £80, and if we were to allow him to purchase his own freedom by half a day at a time, or a twelfth part of his

value, it is evident that for the sum of £6, 13s. 4d, he would obtain half a day at his own disposal, at which time he might either labour for himself, in obtaining produce for the market, or engage himself by task-work to those who might have occasion for his services. This plan once begun would proceed in an increased ratio, and in a course of time proportioned to his exertions, he would become his own master. If we suppose that by this process he should be enabled, in each year, to purchase half a day in each week, it would require twelve years to purchase his freedom, at the end of which time, it may reasonably be presumed he would have acquired such habits of industry, as would induce him to continue his labours, and after having obtained his freedom, to secure for himself the necessaries, and even the conveniences of life.

Here a new scene of things would gradually open; and as the Negro began to feel the desire of enjoyment common to all human beings, he would provide himself with the articles that offered themselves to his notice, and from being a mere tiller of the soil, would himself become a *consumer*; so that in due time the great population of the islands would constitute an industrious body of people, adding to the numbers of the Colony, and purchasing the manufactures of the mother country. Nor would the advantages to the master, considered merely with reference to his pecuniary interests, be of less importance. The amount annually derived from the purchase of their freedom, would form a considerable addition to the income of his property. The cultivation by task-work would keep pace with the abolition of slavery; and when the whole of the slaves were liberated, it is not difficult to foresee that the value of the land *alone*, from the improved modes of cultivation, and the increased demand for the necessa-

ries of life, would not be less than that of both the land and slaves upon the present system; whilst, by the amount paid for their purchase by the slaves, the Colonial proprietors would have been, for many years, in the receipt of an ample income, and would, without any real loss to themselves, have received one portion, at least, of the immense sum which Mr. Barham claims from the country*—having obtained the purchase of the slaves from the slaves themselves, who, having thus risen to a higher rank in society, would become, in many instances, not merely the labourers, but the farmers and occupants of land: thus giving to it an additional value, of which, although the precise extent is not easy to calculate, the certainty is not difficult to foresee.

To this primary and most desirable mode of emancipation, others should be united, of which the following are the most important.—1. The entire abolition of that remnant of the Slave-trade, which consists in the sale and transportation of slaves from one British colony to another; a practice which, by keeping up a continual change, operates in a manner nearly as unfavourable to all progressive improvement, as the Slave-trade itself.—2. The attachment of the slaves more peculiarly to the soil, in the nature of *adscripti glebæ*, not to be sold or punished, except for offences proved before a competent authority.—3. The regular solemnization of marriage amongst the slaves, and the correction of licentious intercourse by established laws.—4. The right of acquiring and retaining property, and disposing of the same by deed or will.—5. The power, after certain preliminary qualifications, of giving testimony in courts of law.—6. The freedom of all children

* Mr. Barham calculates the value of our Colonial possessions at 128 millions, of which that of the slaves alone amounts to 64 millions.

born in marriage after the father has begun to purchase his freedom, and whom he supports at his own expence. When by these, and similar regulations, the condition of the slave is gradually improved, and he has imbibed the feelings of a husband and a parent, the idea of property, and the consciousness that reliance is placed on his asseverations, the barrier between slavery and freedom is nearly withdrawn. That voluntary labour would be attended with greater certainty and less expence to the employer, there can be no doubt. The rate of wages would, as in all countries, have reference to the price of provisions; the exorbitant demands of some, would be met by the willingness of others to labour for a more reasonable support. The same circumstances would take place as occur in other countries, under the adoption of free labour—a new soul would be given to the population, a greater activity would prevail through all ranks, and better modes of cultivation be introduced. The Negro population would no longer appear as a distinct mass, separated and numbered out in opposition to the White; but like the laborious part of the population in other countries, would form the great body of the people—a faithful and a hardy race, attached to their native spot by the strongest feelings of the human mind—no longer a cause of disgrace, anxiety, terror, and distrust, but a support, an honour, and a defence.

In assenting to these statements, and in the adoption of measures for carrying them into effect, the Society trust that no friend to the claims of human nature, the character of his country, or his own true interests, can be found indifferent; but if objections should still arise, let us, in a few words, consider upon what they are founded.—The claim brought forward by an able advocate of the British Colonists is, that as the mother country has sanctioned

and encouraged the cultivation of the West India Islands, by the labour of slaves, and now means to abrogate that practice, it is incumbent on her to purchase the whole of the Colonies, at the expense of nearly 130 millions.† The answer is, that the country does not intend, and has never proposed to abolish the cultivation of the soil in its present form; until measures are adopted not only for continuing it by safer, better, and more effectual means, but for improving and extending the cultivation, preventing those disasters that might otherwise be apprehended, establishing their internal governments upon the principles of British law, and rendering them an advantage to the parent state; instead of what there is at present too much reason to apprehend, an incumbrance and an expense. If, in the prosecution of this object, inconveniences should arise, and unavoidable losses be incurred, either by states or individuals, it will then be proper for the Colonists to apply to Parliament for that relief which, under such circumstances, the nation could not refuse to give; but to suppose that the nation would, in the first instance, charge itself with the enormous responsibility that must attach to an undertaking, which can only be conducted under the immediate direction of prudent, skilful, and deeply interested individuals, is a proposition to which even the eccentricities of the celebrated South Sea scheme afford no parallel.

As it is by the frequent sale and transfer of slaves from Island to Island, that the evils of the system of slavery are greatly supported, and all attempts at improvement impeded; and as the termination of this traffic is subject to the decision of the British Legislature, in the

† See *Considerations on the Abolition of Negro Slavery, and the means of practically effecting it.* By J. Barham, Esq.

same manner as its parent stock, the African Slave Trade, the Liverpool Society wishes to point out the advantages which, in its judgment, would either immediately or remotely be derived from the adoption of such measure.

It is only on the ground of humanity that this country can interfere with France, Spain, and Portugal, for the abolition of their Slave-trade; but surely we ought first to extinguish what exists of our own between Island and Island. Then, and not till then, we may go with clean hands before the other maritime powers, and expect a favourable answer to our representations.

By the termination of the Slave-trade in our own Colonies, the Slaves themselves would advance in the scale of improvement. Under the mode of treatment we have contemplated, Slaves would multiply fully as fast as free men; and from various examples in the West Indies and America, we might reasonably expect an increase of at least 25 per cent. every ten years. What, may we ask, would be the consequence of this increase, even without any positive exertions of benevolence for the emancipation of the slaves? We find that, in the oldest British Colonies, with the exception only of Jamaica, that the population thirty years ago, or more, was greater than it now is; and we may therefore presume that it is now as numerous as, under present circumstances, there is occasion for. If, then, 25 per cent. were added to the population in ten years, additional employment must either be found, or the slaves must be at liberty to seek it for themselves, or, in other words, would become free.

Under such circumstances, the British Colonists would probably follow the example of the Spaniards and Portuguese—they would make their own bricks and the packages of their cotton and sugars; they would also refine or clay their sugars, and make every thing for themselves

which they could so obtain with more advantage and less expense than by importing; and in the present state of commercial knowledge, no objection would be raised in the mother country in the way of their doing any thing which would be to their own advantage; it being immaterial to this country in what manner the Colonists take payment for their produce.

During this state of things, the industry, the knowledge, the habits, and the comforts of the slaves, would be gradually improving. Necessity, and a desire to enjoy the fruits of labour, would be found to operate—equally in warm as in cold countries.—The proprietors would at every step find their property increased, by a gradual transfer of value from the slaves to the land; and from the adoption of the measures before suggested, circumstances would concur to fit them for freedom, just at the time when, from their increased population, and other favourable circumstances, their masters would be prepared, and would find it for their interest, to set them free. Nor is it to be considered as a slight advantage, that the West India Colonies would then become a suitable place of residence for young men of talent and exertion, from the mother country, who might there prosecute their respective employments, without those deplorably injurious effects upon the principles, character, and morals, which must unavoidably ensue, as long as they are conducted under a system of slavery.

Suggestions have been thrown out by the advocates for Slavery, that if the Slaves in the British Colonies were liberated, they would be too indolent to labour; the consequence of which, it is said, would be a great increase of the Slave-trade of other nations, and of Slave cultivation in their Colonies;—whence it is inferred, that we might chance to increase, rather than diminish, the evils of

humanity. From all that the Society can collect, by the information obtained on this subject, the precise reverse of this would be the fact. If, in the course of time, we could have a large population of free labourers on the fertile soils of Demerara, how could the planters of the Brazils and Cuba stand the competition? They would be compelled to relinquish both Slavery and the Slave-trade. But at all events, the mode here pointed out, of a gradual improvement, and consequent increase of population, could have no such pernicious tendency; as the labourer would, in such cases, seek the employer, and not the employer the labourer; nor would the slaves be liberated until they had acquired industrious habits; and when so liberated, they would soon destroy all motive for foreign Slave-trade, by the competition of the cheaper productions of free labour; whilst, at the same time, they would prevent the possibility of a recurrence to the cultivation of the soil by the labour of Slaves; the greatest practical error, as well as the greatest calamity, that has ever disgraced and afflicted human nature.

WILLIAM ROSCOE, PRESIDENT,
ISAAC HODGSON, SECRETARY.

Liverpool, 16th February, 1824.

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A
LETTER
TO THE
GOVERNORS, LEGISLATURES,
AND
PROPRIETORS OF PLANTATIONS,
IN
THE BRITISH WEST-INDIA ISLANDS.

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND
BEILBY PORTEUS, D.D.
BISHOP OF LONDON.

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TO THE

*Governors, Legislatures, & Proprietors of Plantations
in the British West-India Islands.*

GENTLEMEN,

THE official connexion which I have with the British West-India Islands, and the Ecclesiastical superintendance which to a certain degree my predecessors and myself have for a considerable length of time exercised over them, has always given me a lively interest in their spiritual welfare, and an earnest desire and endeavour to promote it, as far as the vast distance between those islands and this country would admit. But among the various classes of their inhabitants, my attention has been more particularly directed to that which is by far the most numerous of them all, and constitutes the great mass of people in all our islands; I mean the Negro Slaves employed in the cultivation of the lands possessed by the West-India Planters, whether resident on their plantations or in this kingdom. On these

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my thoughts have been anxiously employed for upwards of twenty years, and I have omitted no convenient opportunity of publicly expressing my sentiments concerning their situation, the necessity of improving it, and the mode in which that melioration of their condition might and ought to be carried into effect. Almost immediately after my appointment to the see of London, I addressed a Letter to the Planters and Proprietors in the islands, intreating them to pay a little more regard to their Negro Slaves than they had hitherto done; and more particularly to make some better provision for their instruction in the principles of morality and religion. Some years after this, I had the good fortune to recover, by a Chancery suit, an estate in Yorkshire, belonging to WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE IN VIRGINIA, which had been bequeathed to it by the great Mr. Boyle, for *the advance or prepagation of the Christian religion among Infidels*; a purpose which had been attempted, but had completely failed. Having therefore obtained a decree in my favour, I was called upon by the Court of Chancery, as one of the trustees of that charity, to propose some other charitable institution in the room of Mr. Boyle's, but approaching as near as possible to his original idea. Accordingly, after very mature consideration, I recommended an establishment for the *conversion and religious*

religious instruction and education of the Negro Slaves in the British West-India Islands, as being in itself an object of the greatest utility and importance, and perfectly conformable to Mr. Boyle's pious and benevolent intentions of imparting the blessings of Christianity to Heathens inhabiting his Majesty's dominions. The proposal was approved by the Lord Chancellor Thurlow, a society for the purpose was formed, a royal charter obtained for its incorporation, and the Bishop of London for the time being was appointed the President of it. This society has accordingly from that time to the present been exerting its best endeavours to promote the great ends of its institution, and has sent out several missionaries to different islands in the West Indies, who have made some progress in their respective missions. But the scanty revenues of the society, the extreme difficulty of finding a sufficient number of clergymen properly qualified for so laborious and arduous a task, the various discouragements and obstacles they met with in the execution of their office, and the vast disproportion of their means of instruction to the immense numbers to be instructed, have hitherto confined the good effects of their labours within a narrow compass, and rendered a more extensive plan, a more liberal establishment, more effectual aid and encouragement, indispensably necessary to the accomplish-

ment of the great object in view. It is to obtain this aid and this encouragement, that I now take the liberty of once more addressing you, Gentlemen, on this very interesting subject; and from an event of the highest importance which has recently taken place, I am led to hope that the present moment is peculiarly favourable to my application to you on this occasion, and can scarce fail of rendering it completely successful.

You will easily imagine that the event I allude to is the abolition of the Slave Trade to the coast of Africa by the legislature of Great Britain. I do not at all mean to enter here into the merits of that great question. It is now decided by a vast majority of both Houses of Parliament, and is become a law of the land, which we are all bound to obey. I hope and trust that every acrimonious sentiment, which was felt by the contending parties in that long and painful conflict, is already, or will be very soon completely extinguished, and the most perfect harmony and good understanding re-established between the islands and the mother-country. The only reason of my introducing the mention of the subject here is to point out how forcibly it bears upon the proposition I have now to lay before you, and what a powerful additional argument it furnishes in favour of carrying immediately into effect that most important measure.

By

By the Act of Parliament which has passed, prohibiting any further importation of Negro Slaves from the coast of Africa, you have now evidently no other resource left, for keeping up a stock of slaves sufficient for the cultivation of your lands, but the natural increase of the Negroes at this time in the islands. Your great object, therefore, must of course be to promote and encourage this increase by every means in your power. Now of these means, the most practicable and most effectual, beyond all controversy, will be the very expedient here proposed; namely, **THE CAREFUL AND ASSIDUOUS INSTRUCTION OF YOUR SLAVES, BOTH CHILDREN AND ADULTS, IN THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AND A STRICT ATTENTION TO THE REGULATION OF THEIR MORAL CONDUCT.** This may perhaps appear at the first view a strange assertion, but it is nevertheless perfectly true, and capable of the strictest proof, from the most authentic documents transmitted from the islands themselves to this Government.

These documents are to be found principally in that large and valuable body of evidence, **THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF PRIVY COUNCIL,** appointed in the year 1788 to examine into the nature of the Slave Trade. In them you will find it asserted, by a great number of most respectable West-India Proprietors, and in a variety of official letters

letters and papers laid by them before the Committee, that one of the greatest and most fatal obstructions to the natural increase of the Negro Slaves in the British Islands, is *the promiscuous and unbounded illicit commerce of the two sexes*, in which the Negro Slaves are permitted to indulge themselves without any check or restraint. This is a fact universally admitted; and it is equally admitted, that unless an effectual stop is put to this licentiousness of manners, *the increase of the native Negroes by births* will never be sufficient to keep up that stock of Negroes which the cultivation of the islands requires. This obstacle, then, must in some way or other be removed; and in what way can this be most effectually done?

Penal laws may certainly be enacted by the colonial legislatures, prohibiting illicit connections among the Negroes, and requiring them to be united by legal matrimony to one wife. But human laws, it is to be feared, will be but a feeble barrier to the ardent and impetuous passions of an African constitution, and very incompetent to contend with the strength of inveterate and long indulged habits of vice.

These can only be subdued by *moral restraints*, by new principles infused into the mind, by the powerful influences of divine grace, by the fear of God, and the dread of future punishment,
strongly

strongly and early impressed upon the soul. These are the only incentives that can prevail upon your Negro Slaves to submit to the restraint of having only one wife; and as this restraint is *indispensably necessary* to that increase of their numbers by birth which the cultivation of your plantations demands, it is most evidently your interest, as well as your duty, to render your Slaves not merely *nominal* but *real* Christians, in order to obtain a sufficient supply of labourers, and to prevent the total ruin of your plantations, or at least a great diminution of their produce.

It is on this ground that you find so many of the most eminent West-India Planters, in their examination before the Privy Council above-mentioned, recommending in the strongest terms the instruction of the Negroes in the rudiments of morality and religion; it is on this ground that it was so strongly enforced by his Majesty's Secretary of State; in his letter to the West-India Governors, in the year 1797; and it is on this ground, that the Planters in the Island of Antigua give such countenance and encouragement to the Moravian missionaries in that island, who have (as I have been informed) converted there at least 10,000 Slaves to the Christian religion.

Taking it then for granted that you will be influenced by these considerations, to bestow the
 blessings

blessings of Christianity on your Slaves, and the benefits of it (even in a temporal point of view) upon yourselves, I shall proceed to consider in what way and by what means this most desirable object may be most easily and most effectually accomplished.

Hitherto, the only mode pursued for converting Pagan nations to the Christian faith, has been by sending missionaries among them, to shew them the falsehood and gross errors of their own religion, and to instruct them in the divine truths of the Gospel, and the duties which it requires of them. This mode has been more particularly adopted from very early times by the Church of Rome, which has a regular college instituted for that purpose, generally known by the name of the *Propaganda Society*, of which the Jesuits were for many years the chief directors and most active members, whose laborious missions to China, to India, to South America, and various other parts of the world, have long been in the hands of the public. They were attended for many years with considerable success; but since the extinction of that order, the zeal and ardour of the *Propaganda Society* has greatly abated, and we hear nothing now of their great success in converting Heathen nations to Christianity, though they are still, I fear, sufficiently active in proselyting individual protestants wherever they can.

Among

Among other religious communities, they who have most distinguished themselves in the business of conversion, are the *Moravians*, or, as they call themselves, the *United Brethren*.

These indeed have shewn a degree of zeal, of vigour, of perseverance, of an unconquerable spirit, and firmness of mind, which no dangers, no difficulties could subdue (combined at the same time with the greatest gentleness, prudence, and moderation), and of which no example can be found since the first primitive ages of Christianity. They have penetrated into the remotest regions of the globe, have sown the seeds of Christianity among the most savage and barbarous nations, from Labradore, Lapland, and Greenland on the north, to the Cape of Good Hope on the south, and have been (as I have already observed) particularly successful in the conversion of the Negro Slaves in several of the West-India islands, more especially that of Antigua. But with the exception of these most meritorious labourers in the vineyard, not much has been done by the protestant churches of Europe, in the business of foreign missions. A few have been sent out by the Danes, Germans, and English, principally to the East Indies, where some converts were made, more particularly by the pious and truly apostolic SCHWARTZ, who executed his mission with such fidelity, earnestness, discretion, and indefatigable
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perseverance, as gained him the entire confidence and affections of the natives, gave him an unbounded influence over them in their temporal as well as religious concerns, rendered his name for ever dear and sacred to their hearts, impressed them with the highest veneration for that divine religion which could produce such an exalted character, and shewed the world what might be done by an ardent and active zeal for the advancement of religion, united with mildness of disposition, with a natural urbanity of manners, and with the most perfect simplicity, sincerity, and integrity of mind.

If two or three hundred such missionaries could be found, and sent to the East and West Indies, I should not at all despair of an almost entire conversion of the Hindoos in the one, and the Negro Slaves in the other. But, alas, such characters as that of SCHWARTZ are too thinly scattered over the world, to flatter us with the hopes of such a number of them being ever collected together for such a purpose. Indeed it is now become (as I find by experience) so extremely difficult to find out clergymen of character disposed to undertake foreign missions, and properly qualified for the due discharge of them, that it is indispensably necessary to have recourse to other means of converting and instructing the Negro Slaves in our islands, than those which have hitherto

hitherto been made use of. Now that which I have to propose to your consideration, is one which, though gradual in its operation, will, if carried effectually into execution, be infallible in its result.

It is, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS IN EVERY PARISH OF THE WEST-INDIA ISLANDS, one or more in each parish, as the extent of the parish and the number of Negroes in it may require; these schools to be formed on the plan originally sketched out by DR. BELL, first established by him at Madras, and since transferred by him in an improved state to this country, where they are beginning to produce the most salutary effects. The peculiar nature, the supereminent advantages, and the extensive and beneficial effects which have been already produced by them, both in the East Indies and in this country, you will find fully explained in the appendix or postscript to this letter. After reading that, which I earnestly recommend to your most serious consideration, you will not, I trust, have any hesitation in applying it to the use of your own Negroes. And if, for the reasons above adduced, you should be of opinion (and I do not see how it is possible for you not to entertain that opinion) that the religious education and instruction of your young Negroes is essentially necessary to restrain them from the most fatal excesses in the indulgence of their sensual appetites; and that

such restraint is equally necessary to keep up a constant supply of home-born Slaves for the cultivation of your lands; you will perceive that these important purposes can in no other way be so easily, so effectually, and so expeditiously obtained, as by the adoption of the schools here proposed.

Assuming, then, that you are resolved upon the measure, the next consideration is, how are sufficient funds to be provided for carrying it into effect? Now I apprehend that in this there will be very little difficulty, as one great excellence of Dr. Bell's plan is, that it is attended with but a very trifling expence. To defray this expence, I would propose,

1. That a general subscription should be set on foot in this country, which I am persuaded would be an extensive and a liberal one. In my own diocese, and particularly in the opulent cities of London and Westminster, I would exert my utmost influence to promote it, and would myself begin it with the sum of £.500.; and if the occasion called for it, would at any time be ready to double that sum.

2. I can entertain no doubt but that the British legislature, which has already manifested so laudable a concern for the *temporal* happiness of the Negroes, will not be indifferent to their *spiritual* welfare, nor refuse their assistance in promoting it, by encouraging the establishment of these parochial schools,

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3. *The Society for the Conversion and religious Instruction and Education of the Negro Slaves in the British West-India Islands* (of which I have the honour to be President) have I think the power, and would not, I am confident, want the inclination to contribute some share of their moderate revenue towards forwarding the plan proposed; as one part of their institution is *the education of the young Negroes*, and they are allowed by their charter to send out *schoolmasters* to the islands, as well as missionaries.

4. Lastly. If these funds should not prove sufficient, a very small parochial rate might be raised on the Proprietors of lands in every island, to which (as they are to reap all the benefits of the institution, in the increase of their native Negroes, and will consequently save all the enormous sums formerly expended in the importation of fresh Slaves from Africa) they cannot, I think, reasonably object.

These are the sources which will, I doubt not, furnish an abundant supply for the support of the establishment here proposed; and the Planters will in a few years, *at a very trivial expence** to the Proprietor, raise up a race of young Christian Negroes, who will amply repay their kindness by the increase of their population, by their fidelity, their industry, their honesty, their sobriety, their

* See the Appendix.

humility,

humility, submission, and obedience to their masters; all which virtues are most strictly enjoined, under pain of eternal punishment, by that divine religion in which they will have been educated, and render them far superior to their unconverted fellow-labourers. This is not merely assertion and speculation. It is proved by *fact* and by *experience*; by the conduct of the Slaves who have been converted from Paganism and instructed in the Christian religion by the Moravian missionaries in the English and Danish islands, where the number of converted Negroes amounts to upwards of 24,000; who so far excel the *unconverted* Negroes, in the conscientious discharge of all the duties attached to their humble station, that they are held by the Planters in the highest estimation, and are purchased at a higher price than their Heathen brethren.

I cannot therefore help flattering myself that you will, without hesitation, adopt this benevolent system. It may be tried at first in one parish in any of the islands, and if it should succeed in that (of which there can be no doubt) it will of course encourage you to extend it gradually through every parish in every British island. The first step must be to provide for each parish a proper schoolmaster, well instructed in Dr. Bell's mode of education, who will be easily obtained on very moderate terms from this country; and the next,

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By the Act of Parliament which has passed, prohibiting any further importation of Negro Slaves from the coast of Africa, you have now evidently no other resource left, for keeping up a stock of slaves sufficient for the cultivation of your lands, but the natural increase of the Negroes at this time in the islands. Your great object, therefore, must of course be to promote and encourage this increase by every means in your power. Now of these means, the most practicable and most effectual, beyond all controversy, will be the very expedient here proposed; namely, THE CAREFUL AND ASSIDUOUS INSTRUCTION OF YOUR SLAVES, BOTH CHILDREN AND ADULTS, IN THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AND A STRICT ATTENTION TO THE REGULATION OF THEIR MORAL CONDUCT. This may perhaps appear at the first view a strange assertion, but it is nevertheless perfectly true, and capable of the strictest proof, from the most authentic documents transmitted from the islands themselves to this Government.

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other publications of the same nature, *to be chosen by the rector of the parish*, under whose superintendance the parochial schools must wholly be placed.

By these means the *adults*, as well as the Negro children, will enjoy the advantage of religious instruction. But then, that they may have sufficient time for receiving it, it will be necessary to indulge them with the *whole of the Sunday* for that purpose. It will be said, perhaps, that they are already so indulged; for on Sunday they are released from all labour on the plantations: it is considered as *their own day*, and they employ it in any way they think fit. This is very true; but there are two most unfortunate circumstances which prevent the Sabbath from being to them what it was, by its original institution, intended to be to the whole human race (whatever their condition or *complexion* might be), A DAY OF REST FROM LABOUR, AND A DAY DEDICATED TO THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF GOD.

The first of these circumstances is, THE WANT OF A DAY, OR PART OF A DAY IN EVERY WEEK, FOR THE CULTIVATION OF THEIR OWN LITTLE PATCHES OF LAND; which want renders it necessary for them to employ a part of the Sunday for that purpose. The other is, the PUBLIC MARKET which is allowed to be held on Sundays, where the Negroes go to dispose of the produce of their lands, their poultry, fruit, and vegetables, and where they

commonly spend the remainder of the day in festivities and amusements not very well suited to the sanctity and seriousness of the Christian sabbath.

Thus are these poor wretches allowed, and in some degree *obliged*, to profane the Lord's day in the grossest manner, in direct opposition to the precepts of Holy Writ, and to the positive injunction of God in the 4th commandment, where he expressly says—"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt *do no manner of work*, thou, and thy son and thy daughter, thy *man servant, and thy maid servant*, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates."—I most earnestly intreat you, Gentlemen, to consider very seriously this *most peremptory prohibition of the Almighty*, and to contrast with it the *actual and authorised practice* of the Negro Slaves. Will you say in effect that they *shall* do what the great Governor of the universe says they shall *not* do? Will you continue to maintain this open warfare with Heaven, and set the authority of your Maker at defiance; or will you not rather on more mature consideration (I feel confident that you will) put an immediate stop to these violations of the day appropriated to his service, by allowing your Slaves a few hours in the week for the culture of their allotments, and by transferring the market for their commodities

dities from the Sunday to some other day of the week.

You will, I acknowledge, by this lose some little time, one day in the week, in the cultivation of your lands, but you will gain the hearts of your Slaves by this small indulgence; their gratitude to you for it will prompt them to make you full amends for this trivial loss, by redoubled diligence and exertion in their work every other day of the week. You will gain also the blessing of Heaven upon your temporal concerns, which will be of more use to you than all the labours of all your Slaves put together.

With regard to the Negro *children*, there will be no difficulty as to the article of *time* for their attendance on the parochial schools. The period for their instruction will be their very early years, before they are fit for labour, or can be of any use in the field. And even when they *are* fit for labour, you will see in the Appendix that two or three hours in the day will be fully sufficient for their attendance on the school; and all the rest of the day they may be employed on the plantations, in such work as they are capable of.

Thus will the whole of your Negro youth in a very short space of time be instructed in the principles of morality and religion, and will present to the Western world the pleasing and interesting spectacle, of a new and most numerous race of Christians “plucked as a brand out of the fire,”

rescued from the horrors and superstitions of Paganism; and this too in the easiest and most expeditious manner, with a very trivial expence to their owners; and that amply repaid by the substantial advantages which (as I have shewn) will accrue from it to the cultivation of their plantations.

I am aware that two obstacles will probably stand in the way of the plan proposed. The first is that most unfortunate prejudice entertained by the Planters against teaching their Negro children to *read*; which must be the foundation of all their religious instruction. They allege, that it will be extremely dangerous to give them this qualification; because it will enable them to read newspapers and pamphlets, filled with the most pernicious doctrines, hostile to all good order and good government, and inciting them to insurrection, rebellion, and disobedience to their masters. Were this the case, I should be as strenuous an enemy to the measure as any one of your respectable body can be; but the real fact is, that there cannot be a more groundless imagination than this. It is on the contrary an undoubted truth, that an ability to *read* is the very best means of preserving not only the Negroes, but all the common classes of people from being corrupted by such mischievous writings. Publications of that sort *will* find their way among them; and if they are not able to read them themselves, they may

and certainly will hear them read by others ; and then being incapable of reading any thing in confutation of them, they of course receive them as undoubted facts, and are thus easily and fatally imposed upon by wicked and designing men. Whereas if they are capable of reading what is alleged on the other side of the question, they may and probably will escape the snare that is laid for them. This was most clearly exemplified in the French revolution, and the last Irish rebellion, where by far the greatest part of those unhappy wretches who were most active and most savage in those scenes of horror, were *ignorant, stupid, uneducated men*, totally unacquainted with the use of letters, and therefore easily deceived, but not so easily *undeceived*. In England, on the contrary, where the inferior classes were generally taught to *read*, the case was quite different. The great bulk of the common people here were indeed at the first a little staggered, and for a while imposed upon by those bold licentious principles which the partisans of the French revolution, especially Thomas Paine and his disciples, propagated with so much effrontery and so much industry through this kingdom. But they soon recovered from this delirium. They saw through the wicked artifices of the abettors of anarchy and irreligion. They saw the frightful dangers that surrounded them, prepared to meet them with vigour, and actually repelled them with success.

And

And what was the occasion of this happy change? It was because the higher orders of the community could *write* and the inferior orders could *read*. It was because for more than twenty years before, upwards of 300,000 children of the poor had been religiously educated in the various charity schools, Sunday schools, and schools of industry of this kingdom, and were thus rendered capable of *reading* and comprehending those admirable discourses, sermons, and tracts of various kinds, which the ablest and most virtuous persons both among the laity and the clergy of this country were employed in composing for the lowest classes of the people, in bringing them down to the level of their understandings, and in making so forcible an appeal, not to the *ignorance* but to the *knowledge* of the inferior orders of the community, that they became sensible of the perils that surrounded them, and were rescued from destruction. These, Gentlemen, are facts which you cannot but know to be perfectly true; and after weighing them well in your mind, you will, I think, no longer entertain the slightest apprehension of *danger* from permitting your Negro children to be taught *to read**.

* It has been said that *oral* instruction will be sufficient to make the Negro Slaves good Christians. It may possibly succeed with some, of good memories and a better sort of understanding. But with the bulk of dull African Negroes it will not. *They* require the strongest possible impressions

The other objection which may possibly impede the introduction of the *parochial schools* into the West-India islands is the idea taken up by some of the Proprietors, that by making their Negroes good Christians they make them bad Slaves; that by admitting them to baptism, to divine worship, to the holy sacrament, and the other privileges

expressions that can be made upon their minds; and we all know that much stronger and more permanent impressions are made by *reading* than by hearing. What the Roman poet said many centuries ago is now become almost proverbial:

Segniùs irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quàm quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.

But besides this, it will be of infinite use to enable the Negroes to read their Bible and Common Prayer-book at *home* as well as at church. It will find useful and proper employment for their time on the Lord's day. It will keep them from resorting to improper ways of spending it. It will be a constant fund of *amusement* to them. For the Bible, besides being the most *important*, is one of the most *entertaining* books in the world; especially to the common people, who are in general observed to take great pleasure in reading it; and it has been remarked by travellers, that in Scotland more particularly they are in summer evenings seen sitting at their doors on the Lord's day, and reading their Bible with apparently great attention and delight.

It should be recollected also, that in the plan here proposed, there is no intention of teaching the Negro children to *write* but only to *read*; which will always be a strong mark of discrimination, a wall of partition, between them and the white inhabitants; will always preserve a proper distinction and subordination between them and their superiors, and present an insurmountable barrier against their approaching to any thing like an equality with their masters.

leges and advantages of the Gospel, they bring them too much on a level with themselves, they raise their ideas above their condition, they inspire them with pride and ambition, render them less fit for labour, less disposed to fulfil the duties of their humble station, and less submissive and obedient to their masters.

But is it possible, or was it ever known in *fact*, that true Christianity ever produced such effects as these? It is perfectly incredible. What! can the religion of the meek and humble Jesus; that religion which above all things inculcates humility, content, patience, subordination, submission to *every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake*; can *that* produce ambition, pride, discontent, and resistance to lawful authority? As well might it be affirmed that the laws of England have a natural tendency to encourage despotism, tyranny, oppression, and persecution. But there is no need for *reasoning* upon the subject. Let us go to *experience and to fact*.

There are, as I have already observed, many thousands of Negro Slaves converted to Christianity in some of the British islands, especially that of Antigua; and what is the case with *them*? Are *they* by conversion rendered proud, insolent, idle, disinclined to labour, rebellious and disobedient to their masters? Quite the contrary. They so much excel all the unconverted Slaves in sobriety, industry, honesty, fidelity, submission and attachment

attachment to their masters, that every Proprietor is anxious to procure them, and, as I have before observed, will give a higher price for them than for their Heathen brethren.

And how can we wonder at this superiority over their Pagan fellow-labourers, when we recollect that the DIVINE RELIGION which they have embraced most expressly enjoins them, under pain of God's displeasure here, and of the severest punishment hereafter, "*to be subject to their masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward: to please them well in all things, not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, with goodwill doing service as to the Lord and not to man.*"† If any one wished to form a slave exactly to his mind, could he possibly do it in terms more adapted to the purpose than these? And accordingly such effects *have* been produced on the minds and conduct of converted Negroes as might naturally be expected from them.

Having thus, I trust, effectually answered the only plausible objections which I have ever heard stated against the introduction of Christianity among the Negro Slaves, and shewn that such a measure would be no less conducive to *your* temporal advantage than to *their* eternal interests; I

† 1 Pet. ii. 18.—Tit. ii. 9. 10.—1 Ephes. vi. 6.—Coloss. iii. 22.
should

should hope that this consideration alone would be sufficient to determine you in favour of the proposition here made to you. But you must allow me, Gentlemen, to add, that I by no means rest this great question on the ground either of private or public utility, but on much higher and nobler principles; on the principles of justice, of humanity, of religion, of duty; by which most sacred ties you are bound as men and as Christians, to take care of the *souls* as well as of the *bodies* of that numerous race of men, over whom you have obtained the most absolute dominion. They are yours, *the whole man*, both body and soul. They are your sole and entire property. Their welfare is placed exclusively in your hands; their happiness or misery depends absolutely on your care of them, and by taking entire possession of them, you have made yourselves responsible for them, both here and hereafter. To you they look up as their masters, governors, guardians, and protectors; as the guides that are to open to them the way to a better world; and they will not, I trust, look up to you in vain. It is a debt which is strictly due to them; an act of compassion to which they have the strongest possible claim.*

* There was a time when some of the West-India Proprietors, and a few persons even in this country, certainly considered the Negroes as a race of beings inferior to men;

By that very large share which the British Nation and the British Islands have, for several centuries, taken in the importation of Slaves from Africa, many thousands, many millions of innocent unoffending human beings have been torn from their native land, from every blessing that was valuable, every connexion that was dear to them, have been conveyed against their will to a country and to a people unknown to them, and without any offence or fault of theirs have been doomed TO PERPETUAL SERVITUDE, a servitude too which at their death they leave (the only inheritance they *have* to leave) entailed upon their latest posterity. These surely are sufferings which call for some compensation; and what better, what more proper compensation can there be, than that of communicating to them the blessings of the Gospel, and opening to them the reviving prospect of eternal felicity in another life, since their fate has been so unfortunate in this. This will be an act of kindness, of benevolence, of charity in its highest and sublimest form, and productive of the most extensive and substantial good. It is a boon which
 comparatively

and as having no souls to be saved. That time is, thank to Heaven, long since past. And if it be admitted (as now I believe universally is) that they have immortal souls like ourselves, notwithstanding their dusky complexions, slow understandings; the arguments here urged in favour their religious instruction (by means of their Proprietors) neither be evaded nor repelled.

comparatively speaking, will cost *you* nothing, but to the objects of it will be invaluable.

It will be a cordial to their hearts, and a support under their toils; it will sooth their minds with all the consolations of religion; it will make even servitude itself sit light upon them, and cheer their souls with the hope of eternal freedom and felicity in another world. Instead of lessening their inclination to labour, it will increase their industry and their desire (in conformity to the commands of the religion they have embraced) *to please their masters in all things*. It will redouble their attachment to those masters, and bind them down to the performance of all their duties by the strongest ties of affection and gratitude.

Nor will *you*, Gentlemen, be without your reward, and that the highest and most gratifying that a human being can receive, the approbation of God, and the applause of the whole world.

You will have the immortal honour of founding a *new school for piety and virtue* in the bosom of the Atlantic Ocean, of erecting a noble structure of religion and morality in the Western world, of exhibiting to mankind the interesting spectacle of a very large community of truly *Christian Negroes*, and of leading the way to the salvation of more than 500,000 human beings, (immersed before in the grossest ignorance, super-

stition, wickedness, and idolatry) with all their countless descendants to the end of time.

Looking forwards, then, as I do, with some confidence to the accomplishment of this great event, it does, I confess, in some degree console and sustain my mind, amidst those frightful scenes that are now passing on every side of us, and those tremendous commotions which are convulsing to its centre almost the whole habitable globe. It will be one proof more, added to many others, of the high and exalted character of the British Nation, and of the extent and grandeur of its views, beyond those of any other nation upon earth. While one immense gigantic power is spreading ruin, devastation, and the most complicated misery over the world; subverting kingdoms, empires, and long established governments, and bursting asunder all the most sacred bonds of civil and political society; we see this small Island, not only exerting itself with vigour in its own defence, and standing up single against the torrent that is overwhelming the whole continent of Europe, but at the same time silently and quietly providing for the future happiness of the human race, by diffusing every where the Holy Scriptures, and thereby sowing the seeds of Christianity over every quarter of the globe.

I allude to the Society formed in Bengal for the translation of the Scriptures into no less than ten

Oriental languages, and the dispersion of them through the vast continent of India; and to a similar institution lately formed in this country, called the *British and Foreign Bible Society*, whose *principal* object is the version of the Scriptures into foreign languages, and the dissemination of them in Pagan and Mahometan countries. Both these societies, though but recently instituted, have made considerable progress in their benevolent undertakings.

The Asiatic Society has already translated several parts of Scripture into the Oriental languages most common in India. The two first Gospels in the Shanscrit language were to be ready by the end of the last year, 1806; and an edition of all the four Gospels in that language will be published with the Greek on the opposite page (with which it perfectly harmonizes) as soon as Greek types can be procured. In the Bengalee there is a new and admirable translation of the whole Scripture completed. In the Marhatta the four Gospels are printed off. The Orissa translation is in great forwardness. In the Persic the book of Psalms is finished. It is intended to commence the translation of the Scriptures into the Tibet, Bootan, Burmah, Assan, Malay, Orissa, Telinga, and Chinese languages, as soon as the funds of the society will enable them to undertake them.

And the very curious discoveries lately made by the indefatigable and pious Dr. Buchanan, afford

afford the best grounded hopes of all those versions being well received, and producing the best effects throughout the greatest part of the Indian peninsula.

The same success seems likely to attend the *British and Foreign Bible Society* instituted for the same purpose in England. It has already, in the short space of three years, extended its operations into almost every quarter of the globe.

It has, by its aid, produced and encouraged institutions similar to its own in Germany and Prussia. By the former of these 5000 copies of a German protestant New Testament have been printed; by the latter, an edition of the Bohemian Bible is in a course of printing for the use of the protestants in Bohemia, Berlin, and elsewhere. Two thousand copies of St. John's Gospel in the Mohawk language, have been printed in London at the society's expence, and distributed among the Mohawks on the great river, and 500 more will soon be sent to the Mohawks lower down on the river St. Lawrence. Of the Icelandic New Testament 2000 copies have been printed at Copenhagen, at the society's expence, and forwarded to Iceland. Two separate sums of £. 1,000. each have been granted by the society towards the translation of the Scriptures now going on in Bengal, into ten Oriental languages. Of these translations I have myself seen specimens. Arabic types and paper have been

been granted by the society for the purpose of printing 5000 copies of the Turkish Testament at Karass on the borders of the Caspian Sea ; an elegant specimen of this Turkish translation I have also seen. New Testaments have been sent to Ireland ; and 20,000 copies of a neat Gaelic Bible is now passing through the press. The English and Welsh Bibles are all printed under the direction of the University of Cambridge. Copies of the New Testament have also been furnished to the convicts at Woolwich ; the prisoners in Newgate, and other jails ; the German soldiers and seamen at Margate, Gosport, Guildford, Dublin, and other places ; the Sea Fencibles on the Essex coast, and the French and Spanish prisoners of war. Abroad, to the British soldiers at the Cape of Good Hope ; the inhabitants of Newfoundland, Halifax, and Nova Scotia ; the settlers at Van Dieman's Land ; the French at St. Domingo ; the Spaniards at Buenos Ayres ; the colonists of New South Wales, and to different parts of France, Switzerland, and Germany.

In short, whether the sphere of its operations be measured from north to south, that is, from Iceland to the Cape of Good Hope, and Van Dieman's Land ; or from east to west, that is, from Hindostan and the shores of the Caspian to Buenos Ayres and the lakes of North America, the range is of vast extent ; and there seems to be no other limits to the beneficial operation of the

the institution than the amount of its funds, which, from the constant accession of new subscribers both at home and abroad (for it is well known and highly approved in almost every part of Europe) appear, at present, to promise an abundant supply.*

These successful exertions, under the direction of its vigilant and highly respectable President, Lord Teignmouth, have secured to the society the support and countenance of some of the most exalted characters in this kingdom;† and it reflects the highest honour on this nation, that those who have most eminently distinguished themselves in the service of their country, have shewn an equal zeal and ardour in promoting the cause of religion and the diffusion of Christianity through every region of the globe.

To these two kindred societies we must add the recently established *African Institution* for the civilization and improvement of that vast continent, which is also supported by many of the most distinguished men of this country, though differing widely in their political and religious sentiments; and which, though its immediate object is not the introduction of Christianity into

* See the Third Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

† The Archbishop of Cashel, Lord Barham, and Lord Gambier, have recently been added to the list of its Vice Presidents.

Africa, yet if it should succeed in its primary view, the civilization of the natives will undoubtedly lead in the end to their conversion.

If to these noble efforts for the dissemination of the Gospel in Europe, Asia, and Africa, *you*, Gentlemen, will have the goodness to add your assistance towards introducing it among your Negro Slaves in the West-India Islands, there will then be a foundation laid for the establishment of Christianity in *every quarter of the globe*. You will, I think, feel a generous pride in following the example of every other branch of the British Empire, and in concurring with them in the comprehensive and noble plan which they have adopted.

These are truly *Imperial works*, and worthy of the British name. These will immortalize it to the latest posterity, and distinguish it most honourably from every other nation in the world.

Let these, then, be the characteristic features of the English Nation. Let the great Enemy of the repose and comfort of mankind, place his glory in *universal dominion*; let Britain place it in *universal benevolence*; and while *he* is subjugating the world by his arms, let Britain be employed in repelling him from her own coasts, in assisting and protecting the distressed, and in meliorating the condition of distant countries, by communicating to them in various ways, the

F blessings

blessings of the Christian Revelation. The final result of all this is in the hands of the Almighty. But whatever that may be, whatever future calamities may await us, we shall have the consolation of having discharged our duty, *in this instance at least*, as Men and as Christians. And we may reasonably hope that such a conduct will have its due weight in recommending us and our cause to the favour of Heaven, and in obtaining for us the protection of that gracious Providence, which has hitherto preserved us amidst the dissolution of kingdoms, and the wreck of empires, and has rescued us from dangers not less formidable, in my apprehension, than even those which now apparently surround us.

I am, Gentlemen,
with very sincere regard,
Your faithful and affectionate
Friend and Servant,

Fulham House,
Jan. 1st, 1808.

B. LONDON.

POSTSCRIPT.

IN the preceding Letter I thought it necessary to point out a mode of providing a Fund for the support of the Parochial Schools, which will, I trust, be established in the West-India Islands; but at the same time I stated, that the expence to the Planters themselves would be *very trivial*. It now appears, from the subjoined Appendix, that it will be *far more trivial* than I at first imagined; for I went upon a supposition that it was necessary for the Parochial Schools to be *Week-day* Schools. But Dr. Bell (the original author of such Schools on the new system) is, as you will see in the Appendix, decidedly of opinion, that *Sunday Schools*, well conducted, will fully answer the purpose of instructing the Negro Children both in reading and in religion. This makes a most material alteration in the state of the case. It cuts off at once the only two specious objections that *can* be made by the West-India Gentlemen, against the establishment of such schools in their respective parishes; namely, the expence of maintaining them, and the loss of the Children's labour to the Planters. For the

expencc, as Dr. Bell states it, will be reduced a mere nothing, a sum below all notice ; and SUNDAY (when there is no work on the plantation) will be the *only day* for instruction, there will be no diminution of the usual labour of the Negro Children, and, consequently, not the slightest loss to their Masters.

A P P E N D I X :

CONTAINING

A SHORT SKETCH

OF THE

NEW SYSTEM OF EDUCATION
FOR THE POOR;

In a Letter from the Rev. Dr. BELL (the Inventor of that
System) to the LORD BISHOP of LONDON.

Parsonage-House, Swanage,
Dec. 21, 1807.

MY LORD,

TO obey the commands, with which you have been pleased to honour me, must needs be as much my inclination as it is my duty. In discharge of this duty, it would ill become me to enlarge on the plan, so happily suggested by your Lordship, to diffuse the blessings of Christianity among a race of our fellow creatures, who are in a peculiar degree entitled to the consolations in this life, which Religion can alone supply. There are no other means now left, adequate to this end, than those which you have proposed and recommended to the British West-India Islands. These silent and gradual means of Religious Education can scarce fail of ultimate success. It is not what a few select spirits may have done, or may still do, for the diffusion of the Gospel in foreign regions, which is to produce extensive and permanent effects. It is what any one may be enabled to do for himself, and for those

those about him, which is to pour into every bosom the blessed comforts of our holy religion.

If, in performing the task assigned to me, I shall, under your sanction, contribute my mite to this great and good design formed by your Lordship, it will prove a new source of comfort to me under the difficulties I have encountered, and the years of toil which I have spent in contriving, demonstrating, maturing, and digesting a system of Education, singularly adapted to the religious instruction of those to whom your Lordship has extended your paternal care and Protection. This fitness of the system to the condition of the Negro Children in the West-India Islands, will appear manifest as I go along; and I shall therefore, without further preface, proceed to draw up, as required, a short account of my new system of Education for the Poor.

This method of practical tuition, which has appeared under different shapes in this country, originated in the Military Male Orphan Asylum, founded at Madras in the year 1789. There it gradually grew to maturity, and, after the experience of several years, was established in all its forms in that school. Thence it was transplanted into England in the year 1797, when it was partially adopted with good success in the oldest charity school in London, that of Aldgate, and in several parts of the kingdom, and is now established at the parochial schools of Whitechapel, and of Lambeth, and at the Royal Military Asylum, Chelsea.

This system rests on *the simple principle of tuition by the Scholars themselves*. It is its distinguishing characteristic, that the school, how numerous soever, is solely taught by the Pupils of the institution, under a *single Master*, who, if able and diligent, could, without difficulty

difficulty, *conduct ten contiguous schools, each consisting of a thousand scholars.*

In addition to this general principle, and independent of it, the Madras School furnishes certain individual practices, or helps, in the art of tuition, by which it's Pupils are initiated into the elementary processes of Reading and Spelling, to say nothing here of Writing and Arithmetic.

For the guidance of those who may be desirous of conducting Education on this principle, adapted in a peculiar manner to large schools for the lower orders of youth, and according to these practices (see p. 41.) which are alike applicable to private tuition, and schools of every description, the following instructions, chiefly extracted from the "*Analysis of the Experiment in Education made at Madras,*" will, it is hoped, suffice.

1. The Asylum, like every well-regulated school, is arranged into forms or classes, each composed of as many scholars as, having made similar proficiency, unite together.

The scholar ever finds his own level not only in his class, but also in the ranks of the school, being promoted or degraded from place to place, or class to class, according to his proficiency.

2. Each class is paired off into tutors and pupils. The Tutor sits by the side of his Pupil, and assists him in getting their common lesson.

3. To each class is attached an *Assistant Teacher*, whose sole business it is to attend his class, to prevent idleness, to instruct and help the Tutors in learning their lesson, and teaching their Pupils, and to hear the class, as soon as prepared, say their lesson under

4. The *Teacher*, who has charge of the class, directs and guides his Assistant, intends him in hearing

ing the class, or himself hears both the Assistant and Scholars say their lesson; and is responsible for the order, behaviour, diligence, and improvement of the class.

5. *A Sub-usher, and Usher* are appointed to inspect the school, to watch over the whole, and give their instructions and assistance wherever wanted, as the agents and ministers of

6. *The Schoolmaster*, whose province it is to direct and conduct the system in all its ramifications; and to see the various offices of Usher, Sub-usher, Teacher, Assistants, Tutors, and Pupils, carried into effect.— From his place (chair or desk) he overlooks the whole school, and gives life and motion to every member of it. He inspects the classes, one by one; and is occupied wherever there is most occasion for his services, and where they will best tell. He is to encourage the diffident, the timid, and the backward; to check and repress the forward and presumptuous; to bestow just and ample commendation upon the diligent, attentive, and orderly, however dull their capacity, or slow their progress; to stimulate the ambitious, rouse the indolent, and make the idle bestir themselves; in short, to deal out praise and displeasure, encouragement and threatening, according to the temper, disposition, and genius of the scholar. He is occasionally to hear and instruct the classes, or rather to overlook and direct the Teachers and Assistants while they do so.

7. Last of all comes the *Superintendent, or Trustee, or Visitor or Chaplain, or parochial Minister*, whose scrutinizing eye must pervade the whole machine, whose active mind must give it energy, and whose unbiassed judgment must inspire confidence, and
maintain

maintain the general order and harmony of the system.

For this purpose there is kept by the Usher, Teachers, or others equal to the office,

8. A Register of the daily tasks performed ; and by the Schoolmaster,

9. A Register of daily offences, or *Black Book*, to be expurgated weekly by

10. A Jury of twelve or more boys, selected for the purpose.

To this sketch of the Madras system, I do not here subjoin, as I had proposed at the outset, an exposition of the *practices* alluded to above, namely, the processes of teaching the alphabet in *sand*, of syllabic reading and unreiterated spelling, &c. &c. as they would occupy too much of the space allotted to this letter.

Having thus briefly detailed the principal outlines of the Madras system of education, I proceed, as enjoined, to state some of the peculiar advantages of this method of educating and instructing the lower classes of the people.

The simple contrivance of *daily reports* is admirably fitted to correct idleness and detect negligence in their origin, and to bear permanent testimony to merit and demerit, even if overlooked in passing.

The Black Book too is a simple and effectual instrument in maintaining order, diligence, good conduct, and the most rigid discipline, *at the least expence of punishment* ; of which it is a main point to be frugal, and a good economist.

It is the boast of this system, that, by the perpetual presence and intervention of our little Masters, as well out of as in school, it not only detects, convicts, and corrects the offender, but for the most part prevents

the offence. It gives, as it were, to the Master the hundred hands of Briareus, the hundred eyes of Argus, and the wings of Mercury.

Its utility is still further to be estimated by the civility, the decorum, *the regard to good order and good government, which it inculcates and exemplifies*; while, by the various offices performed in the different departments of the school, it prepares its disciples *for business*; and instructs them to act their part and perform their duty in future life with punctuality, diligence, impartiality and justice; and also cultivates the best dispositions of the heart, by teaching the children to take an early and well-directed interest in the welfare of one another.

By these means a few good boys selected for the purpose (and changed as often as occasion requires) who have no other occupation, no other pursuit, nothing to call forth their attention, but this single object (and whose minds you can lead and command at pleasure) form the whole school, teach the scholars to think rightly, and, mixing in all their little amusements and diversions, *secure them against the contagion of ill example; and by seeing that they treat one another kindly, render them contented and happy in their condition.*

To all this may be added the following important advantages resulting from the new system of education, as expressed by the Trustees of the Parochial Schools at Whitechapel, in their printed report of April 7, 1807.

“ 1st. It completely fixes and secures the attention of every scholar; the indolent are stimulated, the vicious reclaimed, and it nearly annihilates bad behaviour of every sort.

“ 2. The children make a *regular* progress in their
learning,

learning, which is daily noted and registered, no lesson being passed over till it be correctly studied.

“ 3. It saves the expence of additional Instructors ; the eye of one intelligent Master or Mistress alone being required to see that their agents, the senior good boys and girls, do their duty in teaching their juniors.

“ 4. It not only possesses excellent mechanical advantages, in communicating instruction generally ; but it is particularly adapted to instil into, and fix practically in the mind, *the principles of our holy religion* ; whilst it materially secures the moral conduct of the children both in and out of school ; and,

“ 5. By economizing time (hitherto so lamentably wasted in many schools conducted on the old plan) it affords an ample and very inviting opportunity of adding to the ordinary establishment, a School of Industry.”

In a word, like the steam-engine, or spinning machinery, it diminishes labour and multiplies work ; but in a degree which does not admit of the same limits, and scarcely of the same calculation as they do ; for, unlike the mechanical powers, this intellectual and moral engine, the more work it has to perform, the greater is the facility and expedition with which it is performed, and the higher is the degree of perfection to which it is carried.

Such are the advantages of conducting a school on the scheme of the Asylum at Madras.

It is almost unnecessary to add, that all the facilities of this system apply alike to the first principles of moral and religious instruction as to the rudiments of reading and spelling. The Teachers, by instructing the scholars in the Catechism and other religious exercises, leave only to the Master or Superintendant the easy

charge of solemn examination, and of explaining to the Teachers what *they* are to explain to the rest of the school.

After what has been here stated, it cannot fail to be observed how suitable the Madras system of education is to the condition of *the Negro Children in the West-India Islands, and the proposed Schools of 1000 children each.*

1st. Because one Master suffices for each School, however numerous.

2. Because, by its means, I am of opinion that *Sunday alone* will suffice for their education, and no time be lost to their daily labour. I am often told by parents, that their children improve more on the Sunday, where the school is conducted on the Madras system, than during the whole week in the schools not so conducted.

3. Because, from among the Book-keepers, or other Europeans or Natives in the employment of the Planters, may be selected Schoolmasters, *without any interference with, or interruption of their weekly occupations;* and thus the expence of importing and maintaining a new race of men, a body of Schoolmasters, will be saved. In the first instance, Book-keepers qualified for the introduction of this system may, I imagine, be readily obtained in the Charity Schools of London, where it is established; or Book-keepers hereafter engaged in this country, may for a few weeks (four will suffice) previous to their sailing, attend these schools free of expence. Such I know to be the liberal and christian spirit of the Managers of these schools, that they will rejoice in an occasion of promoting the grand object which your Lordship has in contemplation.

4. Because, by its registers and reports, it falls, at a very small expence of time and trouble, *under the inspection,*

inspection, direction, and control of the Parochial Clergy, should your Lordship so choose; and thus will cost nothing for *that*, without which any system is of small avail, viz. *faithful, able, and professional superintendence*.

I now proceed to answer in order, the questions you was pleased to put to me. Your Lordship asks 1st, What is the earliest age at which children are in general capable of learning to read by this method?

I answer in general, that *no age is too early*. As soon as children can articulate, they may be taught to pronounce the letters, the printed characters of which they are afterwards to distinguish by the eye, and form with the finger. But into the proposed schools, if within due distance, they may enter at *four*, (children are more forward in warm than in cold climates) which is the age of admission into the Madras Asylum.

2. In what time will they be sufficiently instructed in reading, and in learning the principles of morality and religion in these schools?

I answer in the words of the records of the Male Asylum at Madras, when that institution was only of half a dozen years standing:

“ John Friskin, a Teacher of twelve years and eight months old, with his Assistants of seven, eight, nine, and eleven years of age, has taught boys of four, five, and six years, to read distinctly and spell every word accurately as they go along, who were only initiated into the mysteries of their A B C eight months before.”

3. What the expence of each child will be upon an average, including books, the salaries of the Masters, and every other article of expence, and supposing the number in each parochial school to be about a thousand?

I know

I know of no article of annual expence, except the salary of the Schoolmaster, and the purchase of books.

With regard to the first, if the school be a Sunday school (which I apprehend will answer the purpose,) we give here five guineas a year to the Schoolmaster. Let it be for the West Indies, £.25 sterling per ann.; this in a school for a thousand is only sixpence sterling for each child per ann.

The expence for books in such a school, will be about the same sum of £.25 per ann. that is, as before, sixpence sterling a year for each child. †

But if the Planters should prefer a week-day school for their Negro Children, and would consider £.50 a year as an equivalent for their Book-keeper's services one hour a day, or as an ample salary to *any* qualified person whom they may employ as Schoolmaster for one hour a day, the expence for each child would then be one shilling sterling per ann.; and sixpence sterling (as before) for books. But I must again repeat, that from the long experience I have had, both at Madras and in this country, in teaching the children of the poor according to my new system of education, I am perfectly convinced that a *Sunday school* will be fully sufficient for instructing the Negro Children in reading, and for furnishing their minds with the soundest principles of morality and religion.

4. How many hours in each day must the children be in the school? and,

Whether they may during the rest of the day be employed in such work as they are capable of?

My answer is, that if it be only a Sunday school, I

† This expence is stated at about double the amount of the price of books necessary for a school of a thousand Negro Children, on an average of eight years.

should

should think *two* hours early in the morning before Divine Service, and *one* after evening Service, would be sufficient, that the poor children may have the remainder of the day for rest and innocent recreation.

If it be a week-day school, one hour every day in the school will be sufficient; and the rest of the day may be given up to the work of the plantations, or any other of which the Negro Children are capable.

I cannot conclude this long letter, which the time does not allow me to shorten, without observing, that on every point which is new to me, and which relates to the state of the West Indies, or requires a local knowledge of these Islands, I would be understood to speak with great diffidence and all deference to those who possess this local knowledge, and who are deeply interested in the instruction and good conduct of their Negroes; which I do verily believe is best to be effected by the means pointed out by your Lordship. From all my brethren who have done me the honour to write to me concerning the effects of the Madras system in their parishes, I have uniformly heard of the improvement in the general behaviour of the children, as well as in their learning; of both of which I have a conspicuous example before my eyes in this parish.

In a word, nothing in my opinion was ever better calculated to promote *the great cause of morality and religion, as well as the temporal interests of the West-India Planters*, than the work in which you are now engaged. The measure planned by your Lordship was alone wanting to crown the long and successful struggle which you have made in the cause of suffering humanity; and the time will come, when this measure, formed for the completion of your great design, will also succeed. Flowing from the pure sources

sources of Christianity, dictated by a sound and enlarged policy, directed to the true interests of humanity, and accompanied by means adequate (with God's blessing) to the end, sooner or later *it will assuredly succeed*. The time will come, and, I would fain hope, is already arrived, when, of the West-India Merchants and Planters, the enlightened from motives of policy, the liberal and merciful from a sentiment of honour and humanity, and the religious and virtuous from a principle of Christian charity and duty, will second your Lordship's views; and, so supported, who will be found to oppose them! If the humble system of education, which was founded and reared in the Eastern world, and thence imported into Europe, be now, by your Lordship's exertions, happily transferred to the Western world; and should it, in the one Indies, prove as instrumental in promoting the benevolent purposes which your Lordship has so much at heart, as it has been in the other in promoting the views of the Honourable East-India Directors, and the Government of Madras, I shall think that I have not lived in vain.

That your Lordship's invaluable life may long be spared to the church and to the world, is my most fervent prayer.

I have the honour to be,

With sentiments of perfect esteem and veneration,

MY LORD,

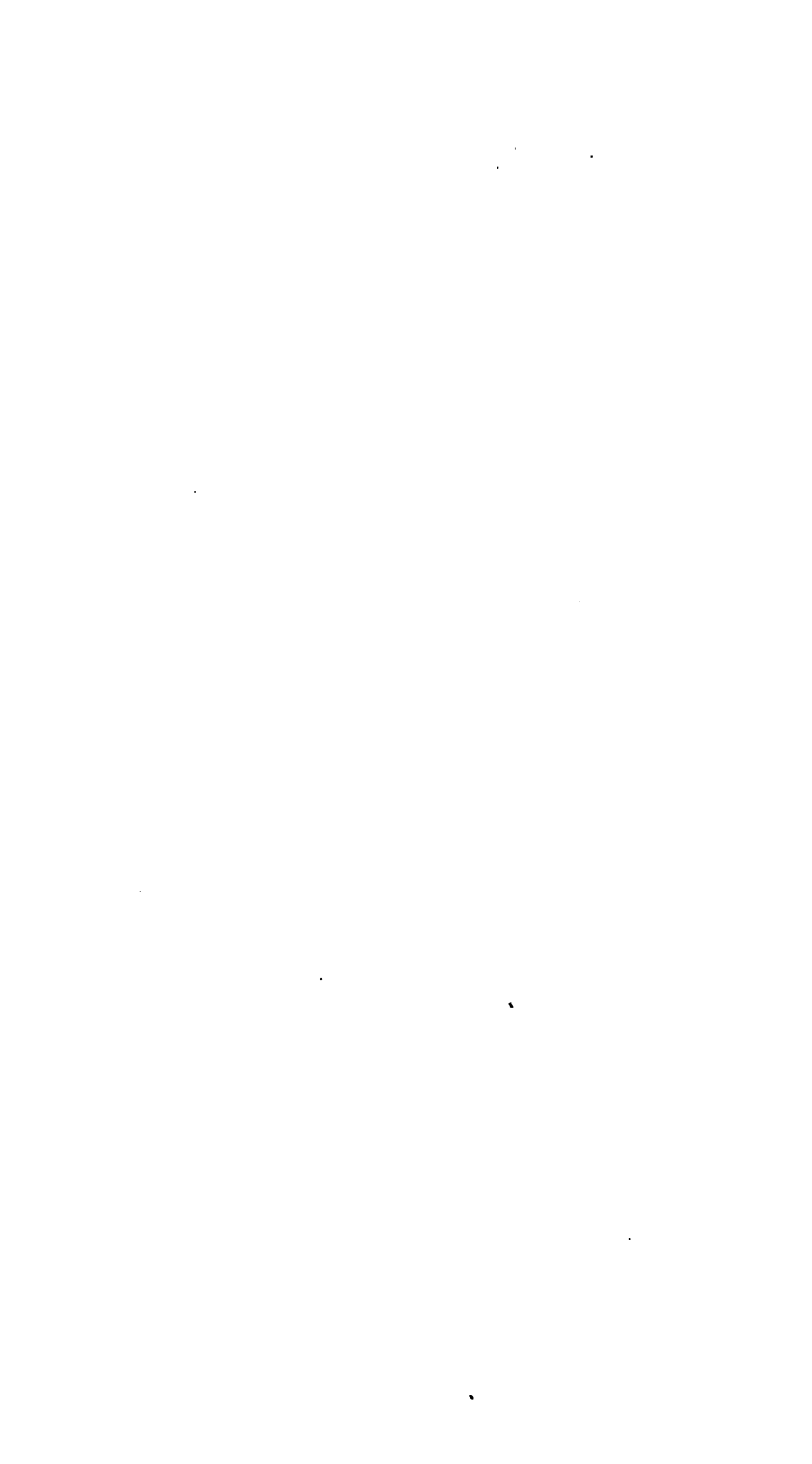
Your Lordship's dutiful and
devoted Servant,

A. BELL.

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